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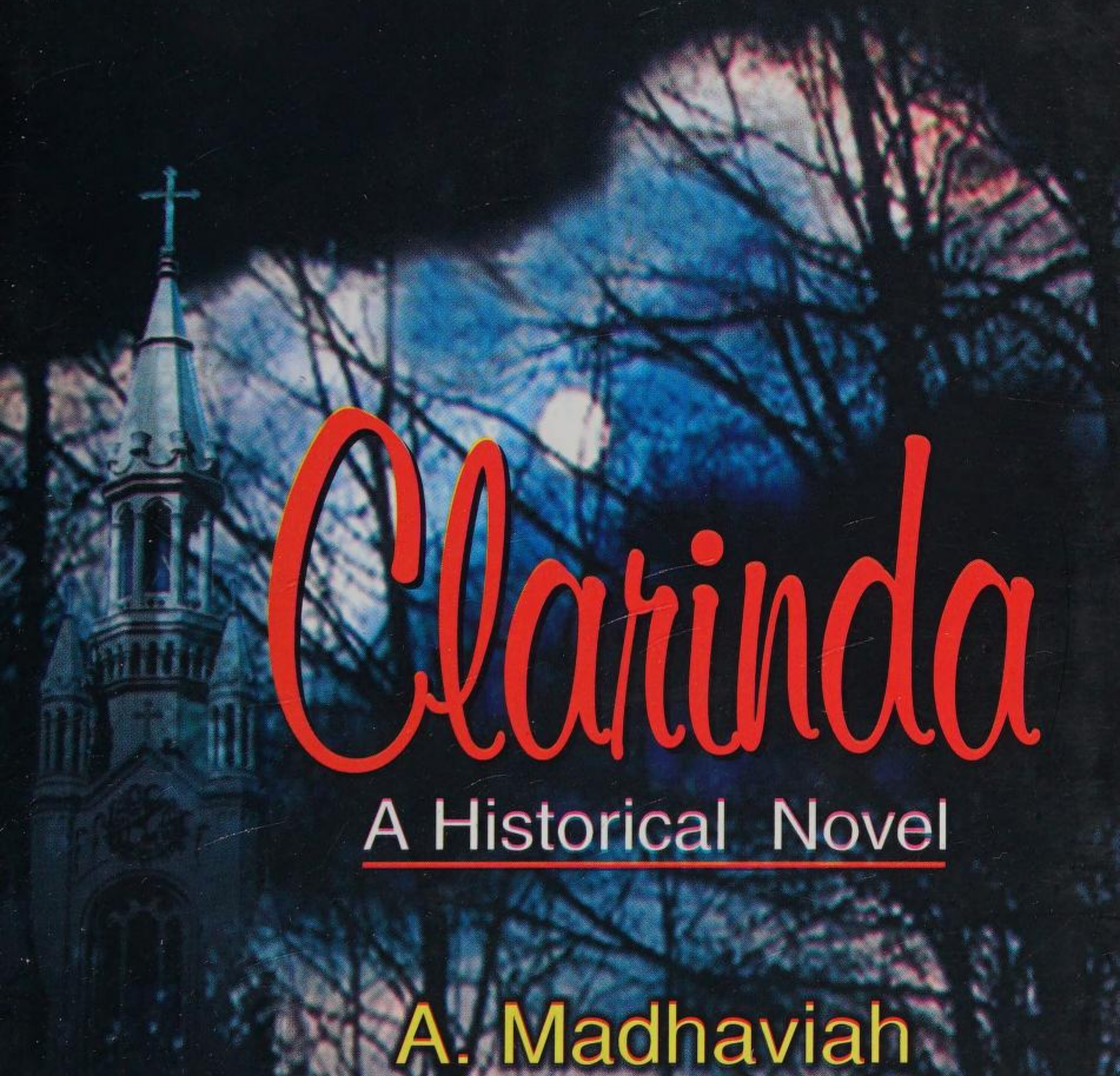

Clarinda

A Historical Novel

A. Madhaviah

Edited with an Introduction by
Lakshmi Holmström

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IT

Clarinda written in English is a novel set in the mid-18th century. The story is based on a historical figure, a real Clarinda, the widow of a Maratha Brahmin, who had been one of the King's servants in Tanjore, and after her husband's death became the concubine of an English officer of the name of Lyttleton. She asked Rev. Schwartz to baptize her when he visited Palayamkottai. He refused, however, because of her 'irregular union'. Some years later, after her husband's death, she was accepted into the church.

From these bare facts, Madhaviah creates a fictionalized early life of Clarinda as she grows up in the principality of Tanjore. The imagined story of this unusual woman, who gradually takes control of her life, gives Madhaviah the opportunity to work out some of his favourite themes: women's education, the questions of *sati* and widow re-marriage, and the encounter between Hinduism and Christianity. The cross-cultural, inter-religious relationship which is at the heart of the novel is unusual and profoundly interesting.

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CLARINDA

A Historical Novel

CLARINDA

The sculpture reproduced on the endpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodhana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From : Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A.D.

Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi

REPRINT OF RARE BOOKS SERIES

CLARINDA

A Historical Novel

by

A. MADHAVIAH

Edited with an Introduction by

LAKSHMI HOLMSTRÖM

Series Editor

Makarand Paranjape

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Series Editor's Preface

Clarinda: A Historical Novel (1915) by A. Madhaviah is the second title in the series of reprints of rare or out of print Indian English books published by the Sahitya Akademi. The series was mooted by the English Advisory Board (1998-2003) of the Akademi with Meenakshi Mukherjee as its Chair. The project was inspired by the idea to make available such Indian English books of value as are not only out of print today but are hard to acquire or have been forgotten. These books may or may not be of great literary or historic importance but their study, for a variety of reasons, is likely not just to be desirable, but also crucial to the understanding of recent Indian literary and cultural history.

From the early part of the 19th century up to the independence of India in 1947, several such books were published. An analysis and interpretation of these titles illuminates not only what might be called the Indo-British encounter, helping us understand the complexities of colonialism, nationalism, gender relations, caste, class, language, identity, or what in a nutshell might be termed the evolution of modern India itself. Many of these books, naturally, might have little commercial value and, therefore, mainstream trade publishers would be unlikely to reissue them. That is why it was felt that the Sahitya Akademi—India's national academy of letters—would be the best agency to bring these books back in circulation. Rather than simply reprinting them, it was thought that a detailed scholarly introduction, with the requisite apparatus of textual and explanatory notes, plus a list of suggested readings ought to be provided so as to help the contemporary reader better situate and appreciate the text. *Clarinda* is thus an important addition to the series.

Madhaviah, the author of *Clarinda*, was a pioneering novelist in both Tamil and English. His early writings began appearing

in the *Madras Christian College Magazine* in the early 1890s. It was in this very journal that Krupabai Satthianadhan's two novels, *Saguna* and *Kamala* were also serialized the same time. Like these two novels, *Clarinda* is also a novel with an Indian woman as its protagonist. The character of Clarinda is drawn from a real person, a high-caste and well-born Maratha Brahmin of the late 18th century Tanjore, who lived with an English officer and became a Christian. Like Saguna, Kamala and Ratanbai (the eponymous protagonist of Sevantabai Nikambe's novel of 1895), Clarinda's progress bears the burden of the multiple discourses. It belongs with a clutch of similar books published in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries. All the three presidencies, Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, were witnessing a similar trend of works by or about women in English or the other Indian languages. What makes these books so remarkable is that they map overlapping and contentious domains: they are not only about the emergence of a new kind of subjectivity of a certain section of Indian women, but also about caste, class, conversion, colonialism, and national consciousness.

Many of these books were published with the active support and encouragement of British colonial authorities or of Indian social reformers. From the British side, such literature was useful in the whole discourse of "Improvement," which both the Liberals and Utilitarians employed to justify empire. The native elites, on the other hand, championed various kinds of social reforms to try to modernize Indian society, hoping eventually to make it fit for self-rule. Of course, the two—colonial power and its intentions and the Indian response in the form of social reform—were neither exactly the same nor comfortably compatible with one other. The Indian reform project often ran afoul with imperial authority, increasingly so as the national struggle for liberation gathered force.

Women, however, occupied a curious pride of place in both these discourses. The signifier "woman" not only encompassed real people who by all accounts were an oppressed group, but also a highly politicized space which was sought to be

appropriated by the various competing forces of the time. Indian woman were at once doubly oppressed, but also singularly privileged as constituting the favoured site for various contending social and cultural forces. "The woman's question" was thus at the heart of the very self-constitution of modern India. It is no wonder then that all major male writers of that time made women the central figures of their narratives. *Clarinda* is a good example of this trend.

As a historical novel which is based on meticulous research, Madhaviah helps not only to excavate and resurrect the life of woman remarkable by any standards for her independence and spirit, but also someone whose life-story illustrates the actualities of a unique instance of the Indo-British encounter. The decay of the native states and civil society, the dysfunctionality of the Indian family and of traditional mores, the oppression of a caste-ridden patriarchal system, and the eventual triumph and "superiority" of the modern Western influence—or, to sum up, decadent Hindu versus a progressive Western (here Christian) social order—are some of the key themes of the book.

If read as a national allegory, we find the "good" but defeated Hindu (represented) by Pandit Rao, who becomes a hermit) in retreat as opposed to an advancing Western, Christian political and cultural formation. Clarinda's English husband not only rescues her from a forced *sati*, but also gives her a kind of happiness and selfhood that few Indian husbands of that period could afford to their wives. Their relationship, thus, represents a different form of conjugal sharing, one based on equality and reciprocity, than was available to most Indian couples of that period. The missionary records of the real Clarinda willy-nilly also reveal the prudishness and theological prejudices of those who baptized her, but this is not an aspect that interests Madhaviah much. As Lakshmi Holstorm points out in her Introduction, for Madhaviah, Clarinda is a personification of courage, passion, and even of women's emancipation. It is Clarinda's agency in her seizure of control over her own life and destiny that fascinate Madhaviah.

The backdrop of the novel, painstakingly recreated by Madhaviah, shows the struggle for supremacy between the English and the French in South India. The eclipse of native states and the triumph of British paramountcy, which were already historical facts by the time the novel was written, are explained even "justified," through a sort of rationalizing of history through back-projection. Against the larger historical and political canvas, is the more contrived and melodramatic sub-plot of family intrigues and a doomed love story. Thus, romance and realism intermingle in interesting and meaningful ways in the novel. If anything in the novel does seem forbidding to the contemporary reader, it is, arguably, the somewhat dated and stilted style. But the efflorescence of Indian English fiction of the 1930s is still two decades away, so Madhiviah's earlier efforts need to be put in a proper perspective.

Most of Madhaviah's other books in both Tamil and English were written before *Clarinda*. Of his English works, the semi-autobiographical *Thillai Govindan* (1903) is more famous. In fact, *Clarinda* has been so much out of circulation that it has been rarely cited and never studies seriously. It is hoped that this reprint, edited so ably by Holmstorm, will put an end to the neglect of what is clearly an important early text of Indian English fiction.

New Delhi, April 2004 **Makarand Paranjape**

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Introduction

by Lakshmi Holmström

Clarinda is the imagined story of a real woman who lived more than 200 years ago. Her original name is lost to us. The historical records only know her by the intriguing name she chose for herself. She lived in the time of the Maratha Rajas of Tanjore, about whom mainstream historians have little to say. Yet Madhaviah, one of the earliest novelists in Tamil, best known for the contemporary and domestic novel *Padmavati Charitram* (1896), re-wrote her story as a historical novel in English. Reflected in Clarinda's story he saw the complexities and dilemmas of inter-cultural and inter-religious encounters between Indians and the newly arrived English in the eighteenth century. He saw these as profoundly relevant to his own time. They continue to be relevant today.

Madhaviah, the author of *Clarinda* was born in the village of Perunkulam in Tirunelveli District, on 16 August 1872. According to his nephew, the Tamil scholar and critic P.N. Appuswamy, the family migrated to Perunkulam in the mid-eighteenth century, when an ancestor Ananta Avadhani was granted one-eighth of the village lands in honour of his learning and scholarship.[1] Madhaviah's parents were Anantanarayanier, and Minakshiammal of Tiruchendur. Madhaviah was the youngest of three: his sister Muthulakshmi was ten, and his brother Yagnanarayaniah six when he was born. His sister died when he was still a young boy.

The first in the family to acquire an English education was Yagnanarayaniah. He left Perunkulam to attend the Hindu College in Tirunelveli, where the Principal at that time was an Englishman, Edwin Winclair. Later Madhaviah joined his brother there. As Tamil was not part of the college

curriculum at that time, Madhaviah studied the language privately, under a well-known pandit and scholar Lakshmana Potti. Both brothers went on to Madras, Yagnanarayaniah first, to attend medical college, while Madhaviah joined Madras Christian College for his B.A. The Principal of Madras Christian College at that time was the well known educationist and missionary, Dr. William Miller (1836-1923; Principal 1862-1890). Miller was a charismatic figure who taught English Literature, and who stated that the principles on which the college was based were 'to mould aright the character of its students and to lead them to the great scheme for the guidance and uplift of the human race which forms the central line of all human history.'[2] Miller was an immediate influence, and Madhaviah was to maintain a correspondence with him all his life. His semi-autobiographical novel *Thillai Govindan* gives an account of other influences upon him at the time: the rationalists Ingersoll and Bradlaugh, and writers such as Huxley, Spencer and Carlyle.[3]

Madhaviah taught at the College for one year after graduating, and in 1893 took up employment as a civil servant in the Salt and Abkari department.

He appears to have begun writing in English and Tamil simultaneously, and with equal felicity in both languages. The same themes and concerns weave their way through all his work. In 1892, six instalments of his Tamil novel called *Savitri Charitram* appeared in the journal *Viveka Chintamani*. It was this novel, finished and revised, which was published as *Muthumeenakshi* in 1903. Meanwhile, from 1892, Madhaviah was publishing poems and articles in English in the *Madras Christian College Magazine*, at that time an important literary journal which published a variety of philosophical and critical articles as well as, for example, serializing Krupabai Sattianadhan's two novels, *Saguna* in 1887-8 and *Kamala* in 1894.

Madhaviah was a prolific writer both in Tamil and English. He wrote three novels in Tamil: *Padmavati Charitram* (1898), *Vijayamartandam* (1903), and *Muthumeenakshi* (1903), and three novels in English: *Thillai Govindan* (1903), *Satyananda* (1909) and *Clarinda* (1915). Apart from this, there were several plays, poems, articles and short stories, in both languages, and translations from and into each. Notable among these were *Udayalan,* an adaptation into Tamil of Shakespeare's *Othello,* and *Kural Naanuru,* a translation into English of four hundred couplets from the Tamil *Tirukkural,* in collaboration with Francis Kingsbury. (Kingsbury, in his turn, is well known for his translation of the 7th century lyrics of the Tamil Saivite saints into English). Madhaviah was instrumental in setting up two journals, *Tamizh Nesan* in 1917, and, after his retirement from the Salt and Abkari Department in 1922, *Panchamirtam* in 1924. A continuation of his first novel, *Padmavati Charitram* was serialized in it, and left unfinished when he died.

Madhaviah died on 22 October 1925. He was attending the Madras University Senate meeting, where significantly and poignantly, his last act was to speak about the need for Tamil to be a compulsory component of the Madras University B.A. curriculum.

In 1887, when Madhaviah was fifteen, he was married to the eleven year old Meenakshi of Narsinganallur. They had eight children: five daughters and three sons, all highly gifted. His only surviving daughter, the artist, Mukta Venkatesh, now 100 years old, has spoken of her father's equal regard for the education of all his children, and his encouragement of an independence of mind and intellect in his daughters and sons equally. Her elder sister Lakshmi once objected to Dr. Miller's description of Desdemona as 'thoughtless' in his famous lecture on *Othello;* Madhaviah wrote to his former Principal, with some pride, about his daughter's spirited defence of Desdemona's actions. Mukta

has also spoken of her mother's complete acceptance of Madhaviah's disregard of ritual and tradition; her tolerance of the number of people who visited and ate with Madhaviah; his non-conformist ways and his liberal principles.

Madhaviah's youngest son, M. Krishnan has left an unpublished monograph of his father, which brings him to life vividly: a powerful swimmer, an outdoor man who loved the countryside, horses and riding, who 'had faith in his bodily resources, but was also a romantic at heart and admired all forms of heroism.' Krishnan goes on to say, 'He disliked pomp and pretence and could not suffer fools gladly—he positively despised cowardice and deceit. He had an unbounded zest for life and a keen sense of humour—he could always enjoy a joke at his own expense. Though it was in literature that his own deep scholarship and urgent talents lay, his fervour was for all forms of creative art, he was a rasika of all the arts'.[4]

Krishnan also gives an account of Madhaviah's extensive library, which contained many classical literary texts in both English and in Tamil. The library was almost entirely lost to termites with only a few books surviving. The best evidence of his wide and eclectic reading is the commonplace book, *Nota Bene*, which he kept from 1906 to 1925, the year he died. It contains entries in translation from the Sanskrit scriptures, from the Talmud, from Kabir, Milton, Byron, Dean Swift Tennyson, Carlyle, J.S. Mill, and a host of others. Madhaviah's eldest son, M. Anantanarayanan's endnote to the commonplace book pays a moving tribute not only to Madhaviah, but to his generation as a whole. The commonplace book is testimony, Anantanarayanan says, of 'Men of my father's stature, their passion for redressing human wrongs, their zest for books and ideas not in themselves only, but as part of living, their intellectual excitability.'

Clarinda : Textual history

The novel was first published in 1915, by the Cambridge Press, Tondiarpet, Madras. We know that Madhaviah worked on it for some time, from the testimony of his daughter, Mukta, who helped him with transcribing references, etc. Unusually for a novel of the time, Madhaviah cites his references, and appends sizeable extracts from Caldwell's *Records of the Early History of the Tinnevelly Mission*, itself a compendium of Missionary journals, letters, reports and other early records, and from Hemingway's *Tanjore Gazetteer*, both of which he follows closely.

A first draft of the novel was certainly finished by the end of the year 1913, when Srinivasa Sastri sent a detailed letter dated 26.12.1913, commenting on it and suggesting changes.[5] There probably were other drafts which his friends looked at. J.C. Maloney, an official in government service, whom Krishnan mentions as a close friend of his father's, writes on 4.3.1914, 'How is *Clarinda* getting on? If you haven't done anything with it, would you let me see it again? Now that I have plenty of time, I might be able to suggest some alterations: though that may only mean that I remodel it according to my own taste which might not agree with yours.' A couple of months later, on 7.5.1914, Maloney writes to say he has read the novel. 'You have improved it greatly,' he says, suggesting only a few stylistic changes. Later that year, clearly, Maloney took the manuscripts of both *Thillai Govindan* and *Clarinda* with him to England. Fisher Unwin eventually published *Thillai Govindan* in 1916, with an introduction by Fredric Harrison, President of the English Positivist Committee from 1880 to 1905, extracted from his article in *The Positive Review* of 1908. *Clarinda* was published only in India.

Few copies of the first edition survive, and the novel was forgotten until recently. The editor of the second edition, David Packiamuthu, formerly Director of the Christian

Literature Centre at Guwahati, and currently based in Palayamkottai (formerly Palamcottah) reports that he first came across a reference to *Clarinda* by A. Madhaviah in an old English catalogue in 1968. He contacted the author's nephew, P.N. Appuswamy, and through him acquired copies of both *Clarinda* and *Satyananda*. In 1992, *Clarinda* was re-issued by the Nanbar Vattam of Tirunelveli, with the sponsorship of Dr. Albrecht Frenz of Stuttgart. The second edition keeps the 'outwork' of the first, except for the frontispiece with an etching of Clarinda's church as it existed at the time. (It has since been renovated and enlarged). Packiamuthu has also added the page from the Palamcottah Church Register of 1780, quoted by Bishop Caldwell in his *Early History of the Tinnevelly Mission* and given some additional notes from Bishop Western's *History of the Tinnevelly Church*.[6]

The current edition keeps the outwork of the first, appends Packiamuthu's extract from the Palamcottah Church Register, and adds two letters, one from Srinivasa Sastri to whom the novel was dedicated, and one from William Miller, probably written after the book was published.

Clarinda, real and imagined

The real Clarinda was undoubtedly a remarkable woman: a Brahman widow who lived with an English officer, and who sought baptism twice from the redoubtable Reverend Friedrich Schwartz, one of the best known missionaries of his time.[7] She was refused baptism on the first occasion, probably around 1771, because of her 'irregular union' with the English Officer, Lyttelton. However, she came to Schwartz again in 1778. The English Officer, by this time, had died of gout. She became a Christian, and a leading member of the Palamcottah[8] congregation.

Historians have recorded that in the early decades of the East India Company, liaisons between English men and

into a different kind of civilizing mission. Caldwell's perspective is very much that of the nineteenth century Church historian, reviewing the events of the late eighteenth century. Caldwell cannot think of Clarinda's lifestyle, before she became a Christian, as other than a harlot's. The expurgated, and somewhat subdued version of her story that he reports is framed by his own highly significant comments. He precedes his account with an apology: 'If it be remembered that the sacred list of our Lord's progenitors, according to the flesh, contains the names Thamar and Rahab [said to be harlots], the following notice of the first convert whose name is recorded in the list of the Palamcottah congregation will not be a stumbling block to anyone.'[17] Caldwell's recognition of the wide-spread prevalence of liaisons between British officers and Indian women in the Company days of the 18th century, and his anxiety to distance the Church from such behaviour, is also apparent in the footnote at the end of his account: 'The officer's inconsistency in instructing this woman in the principles of that religion whose precepts he was openly violating appears more anomalous and extraordinary to us than it would have been considered at the time, the inexcusableness of such connections not being so distinctly and generally recognized in India then as it is now.' [18]

The missionary records, of course, deal only with the latter part of Clarinda's life, that is, from the time she first seeks baptism, and after she has been living with Lyttelton for some time. Her life as a Christian woman tells its own story of conflict, struggle and power politics. But this is not how Madhaviah wishes to see it. His story is strikingly different from one that the missionaries tell. For him, having made the crucial decision to become a Christian, Clarinda takes control of her life and chooses a career of exemplary and noble service. Far more interesting to him are the events leading up to this moment, the very story of her shadowy

past, in fact, which was a source of embarrassment to the missionaries. In his introduction he refers to the 'strange and remarkable story' that emerges from contemporary records, and 'how much remains to be guessed at or imagined as one might choose.' Madhaviah chooses to tell an entirely imaginary story of a high spirited Brahman girl growing up in a traditional family; her romantic encounter with Lyttelton; their idealized but doomed relationship. All this is set against a crucial historical moment in Indian history.

Clarinda: The novel

Vedanayakam Pillai *(Pratapa Mudaliar Charitram, 1879),* Rajam Iyer *(Kamalambal Charitram, 1896)* and Madhaviah are often cited as the founders of the Tamil novel. But Madhaviah differs from the others in three main ways. He wrote prolifically in both English and in Tamil. He truly reflected contemporary life, particularly life in the Chennai of his time; at the same time he wrote two historical novels, one in English, *Clarinda,* the other in Tamil, *Vijayamarthandam,* reflecting the relevance of the past to his own time. Finally, Madhaviah was equally a reformer and a novelist. His main characters are informed by a moral earnestness and purpose. However, Madhaviah is interested profoundly in their psychological make-up; the plotting of their thoughts and feelings as they arrive at their moral decisions. The forms as well as the content of his novels are innovative.

Clarinda is a historical novel in the realistic mode. Madhaviah borrows heavily from the *Tanjore Gazetteer* for the material in Book I and this is the novel's historical backbone. The violent political encounters and events which take place while Clarinda is growing up, and the machinations, alliances etc. between the different parties seeking control over Tanjore are reflected in the domestic intrigues and machinations that take place in Book II. It is after these are resolved that Clarinda is able to break free and shape her own life in Book III.

The events which make up Book II and a good part of Book III are entirely imagined. The domestic plot of intrigue, jealousy arid avarice is similar to Madhaviah's exposé of domestic politics in his other novels: the machinations of Sala and her lover Sankaran which almost destroy Padmavati in *Padmavati Charitram*, the intrigues of Rungier to cover up his affair with Andal, and the attempts by Rungier's sons to fiddle with their father's will in *Satyananda*, etc. This is also a sphere where superstitious beliefs, astrology, exorcism etc. are manipulated for individual ends. Perhaps it is this sharp critique of his community and of the hypocrisy of men and women in high places that his nephew, P.N. Appuswamy meant, when he wrote that there is much of Thackeray's style (paani, in Tamil) in Madhaviah's novels.[19]

But Madhaviah's characters are intended to be realistic, not caricatures. In Book II he creates strong characters to carry through his plot of jealousy and intrigue. It is here too that he develops a method of interior monologues, or prose soliloquies which give depth to his characters and enable him to analyse their motives.[20] In particular, this method enables him to reveal Clarinda's self-reflection; her awareness of her thoughts and emotions. He uses the same method in Book III to chart the development of the relationship between Clarinda and Lyttelton. The rift within the marriage is treated with considerable insight. It is only towards the very end of the novel that Madhaviah himself draws away from the story, leaving Clarinda to move back into the silence of the records.

Padmavati Charitram, written in Tamil is perhaps the most vivid and lively of Madhaviah's novels, while *Thillai Govindan*, in English, reflects most closely his own intellectual dilemmas. But *Clarinda* is possibly his most ambitious work, drawing together his life-long concerns, and seeing them newly.

Clarinda: The colonial encounter

Madhaviah's story is above all, one of a pre-colonial encounter between the East and the West; the meeting between two different cultures and religions, or rather, of individuals who represent these larger notions. (The 'Prayer' which precedes the novel makes a distinct reference to the two graves of Clarinda and Lyttelton as 'East and West' lying side by side.) The period in which the novel is set, i.e. the second half of the eighteenth century, exactly matches the years during which the British and the French transformed their trading initiatives into political power, and began to vie with each other for control over India. And of course, it is important that Madhaviah imagines this encounter from his own location within an imperial history, at a time when that history is just beginning to be undermined.

After the decline of the Vijayanagar kingdom in the 16th century, local rulers, Nayakas, who were established at Madurai, Jinji, Trichinopoly etc, flourished, virtually free from outside interference. The growth in production of paddy and the export of fine cloth as far afield as Europe, the Middle East arid South East Asia were interrupted only by occasional warfare such as the conflicts that established the Maratha Rajas in Tanjore in place of the Nayakas, or the conflicts between the Palayankaarar or 'Poligars'.[21]

All this changed, however, after the death of the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1748. After this event, the whole of the south of India was overrun by factional conflict, already stirred up by foreign intervention, as when the British took sides over the succession to the throne of Tanjore. At first, Nazir Jung, the Nizam's second son assumed power in Hyderabad. But Muzaffar Jung, a favourite grandson, contested Nazir Jung's claim. To put it simply, the French ranged themselves with Muzaffar Jung, and also supported Chanda Saheb in his on-going struggle for the Nawabi of Arcot. Meanwhile the British formed an alliance with Nazir Jung, and the other claimant

Indian women happened very frequently. There were very few English women in the colonies at this time. The Company certainly did not pay for the men in their employ to bring their wives to India, and the men could not afford the expenses of the passage to India, leave alone the expenses of setting up and maintaining suitable households. It is apparent that the kind of relationship that obtained between English men and Indian women depended on social hierarchy. Whereas the rank and file members of the Company personnel resorted to sexual relations with prostitutes, it seems that the Company Officers often lived with Indian women in long-term relationships, very like marriages. The children were often baptized, and their education provided for. Many of the officers left their estate, or a good part of it to their Indian mistresses and families.[9]

Unlike Clarinda, though, most of the Indian women who lived with Englishmen during this period, kept their own religion and lifestyle, they also seem to have been financially dependent on their partners in a way that Clarinda was not. Clarinda sought baptism not once, but twice. She wanted to be baptized not only during Lyttelton's lifetime but also after he died, leaving her a wealthy woman who could have lived an independent life. However, she chose to live within the small newly established Christian community, as its active and resourceful leader.

Madhaviah quotes two sources for his information on Clarinda: Bishop Caldwell's *Records of the Early History of the Tinnevelly Mission of the SPCK and SPG* (1881)[10] and Canon F Penny, *The Church in Madras* (1904). In his turn, for the story of Clarinda's conversion, Caldwell quotes mostly from Wilhelm Germann's *Missioner Christian Friedrich Schwartz,* which he describes as 'the recent life of Schwartz by Germann, formerly a missionary at Tranquebar, compiled from letters and documents preserved in the Mission archives at Halle.'[11]

Germann's account of Clarinda's baptism, quoted by Caldwell, and appended by Madhaviah is a more sanitised version than the account given in Schwartz's journal (translated in *Neuere Geschichten* and cited by Bishop Western in *The History of the Tinnevelly Church.)* A comparison between the two accounts is revealing. In his journal, Schwartz writes that a Brahman widow came to him in 1778 'with her adopted son, and asked for baptism herself, *since the child had already received emergency baptism at his birth'* (my emphasis). Schwartz reports that she reminded him that once before he had refused her baptism because she was living with an English officer. In 1778, he reports her as saying, 'Some years ago, I requested you to teach and baptize me, but the mode of life I then lived made you refuse me. The former reason of your refusal does not hold now, *though I have not been without temptation.*'[12] Details of such forthrightness on Clarinda's part are missing from Germann's—and therefore Caldwell's—account.

Canon Penny's version is much briefer; he states that Clarinda was married to 'one of the company's military officials' (footnoted 'It was not a marriage in the English and Christian sense'); and that Schwartz baptised her and her son.[13]

It should be noted that the status of the son, or adopted son, is never clear in any of the sources. This blur in the historical accounts is reflected in Madhaviah's fictional story. In the novel, Clarinda becomes pregnant, but we are never told when (or indeed if) she loses the child. The boy who is baptised as Henry Lyttelton is the son of her devoted servant Sarada.

When the records—particularly of Schwartz's direct testimony through his journal and his letters—are examined closely, it is clear that in her own time Schwartz and the other missionaries were never entirely comfortable about Clarinda and her background. The Company at this time did not allow missionary activity in its territories, but seems to

have had no objection to employing the German missionaries who were actually in India as part of the Danish mission, as chaplains to the small British communities. Schwartz was chaplain in Trichinopoly, and later moved to the independent principality of Tanjore. He thoroughly disapproved of the riotous lifestyle of the English soldiers, and was scrupulous about whom he would baptize. Coming from a German Pietist background, he was extremely concerned about establishing the genuine piety of the applicant.

It is true, Clarinda is given the title 'Rasa' (Tamil for Raja or king) in deference to her aristocratic background. She is always referred to as the 'Brahman woman', and we are told again and again that she was a woman of wealth. But against this undoubted status and class, there is always set the dubiety of her personal history. For example, she was thwarted for months when she travelled to Tanjore to petition for a suitable catechist for Palayamkottai. Germann reports that the Church's reluctance towards her was because of 'various rumours' that had reached Tranquebar before her arrival at Tanjore.

Evidence of Clarinda's independence of character and high-spiritedness is apparent in one of Schwartz's letters written to the SPCK (the Anglican Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, who sponsored his work after he left Tranquebar). He wrote after his visit to Palamcottah, to consecrate the church that Clarinda was instrumental in building:

> I have most earnestly exhorted the Brahman woman, as she is called, to be on her guard against frivolity and have faithfully admonished her. She accepts everything that is said to her, and if one were to judge by her behaviour to her teachers, one would judge very favourably of her. She offered me a 100 Rupees to defray the cost of my journey. I did not take it, but told her that though I regarded it as in itself right and reasonable

that she should, as a well-to-do person bear part of the cost, I could not and would not accept it, lest evil disposed persons should calumniate her as having set everything right by paying.[14]

Although the context of this letter and the circumstances referred to are not quite clear, it is apparent that in spite of her spirit and resourcefulness, and although she was the leading member of the Palayamkottai congregation, Clarinda continued to be disadvantaged and open to criticism as a woman, and a woman with a particular history.

After Clarinda's death, which Western places at about 1806, there are very few references to her in the mission records. It is as if even her name is forgotten, as she is only mentioned as 'the Brahman woman' by the missionaries. The Rev. James Hough who was appointed as Chaplain of Palamcottah in 1816 mentions her only in reference to the church she built, and does not seem to have heard the story of her baptism: '. . . a small chapel, built some years ago (as I am informed) by a Brahmany woman for the benefit of the Mission, though she does not appear to have been a convert to Christianity.'[15] We also hear nothing more about her adopted son, to whom she left a considerable sum of money. This too is unusual, as many of the prominent Palayamkottai Christian families of today are very aware of their antecedents and have kept alive their family histories.[16]

Robert Caldwell was a linguist and grammarian as well as Bishop of Tinnevelly (now Tirunelveli) and Assistant to the Bishop of Madras. He began writing in the 1840s, at a time when the Empire was just being established. Equally, the Anglican Church sought to establish itself with the foundation of bishoprics, in Calcutta in the first instance, and in Madras in 1835. From 1833 missionary activity of all kinds began to be widespread in India. The Evangelicals wanted to shift the British project from a mere mercantile endeavour

reform. In his view, it is upper-caste women who insist on the superstitious beliefs and practices of popular Hinduism; because they do not have access to a progressive and rational education. Often they are not allowed to go to school, and they will not learn from their husbands and brothers. Padmavati learns from her husband; her marriage to Narayanan turns out to be one of mutual love and respect. Kalyani will not learn; her married life is tragic. Yet it is not true that all Madhaviah's female characters are taught by benevolent patriarchs whom they humbly admire, and who will always be their intellectual superiors: Padmavati (in the posthumous *Padmavati, Part III)* grows up to be a wise counsellor to her husband, in many ways more tolerant and open-minded than he is. Madhaviah clearly yearns after an ideal of equality and intellectual companionship within marriage: it is in *Clarinda* and *Padmavati III* that this romantic ideal is most nearly achieved.

Muthumeenakshi, which was actually begun earlier than *Padmavati*, in 1892, was finally published in 1903. It is the controversial story of a widow re-marriage, told in the first person. Madhaviah wrote in 1924, in the preface to the second edition, that when it first came out, The Hindu newspaper was outraged, and was outspoken in its disapproval of the novel's theme and perspective. The terrible plight of widows haunts almost all of Madhaviah's work: the cruel practice of shaving their heads; the Brahman community's view of them as inauspicious beings; sexual exploitation of them on the one hand, and their own thwarted sexuality on the other; the denial of re-marriage to them, and their near-impossibility of leading useful lives. And while widow-remarriage was a theme often taken up by other reformist writers of the time [e.g. *Chandrikayin Kadai, (Chandrika's story)* Subramania Bharathi, 1924], Madhaviah was more courageous and daring in his novels. For example, as Anantha Raman points out, whereas the widows for whom most of the reformist writers

proposed re-marriage were virgins, in *Muthumeenakshi,* the protagonist is raped by her husband, even before the rithu shanti kalyanam or post- puberty nuptials, when a marriage was customarily consummated.[24] The plight of a widow, Andal, who is sexually exploited is taken up very dramatically in *Satyananda,* while another widow in the same novel succeeds in marrying the man of her choice, and ends up teaching in the school that he opens for widows.

Clarinda not only brings together many of Madhaviah's concerns as a writer, to some extent it pushes them further. First of all, the question of education. Clarinda too is educated at home as a child, in Sanskrit, by her learned grandfather, Pandit Rao. At the age of twelve, she is already widely read. She has been given a classical education such as a bright boy might have received. Pandit Rao says, 'Not many young Sanskrit scholars twice your age have read as much, or can boast of a keener or better trained intelligence; but any girl of even half your age will know more of family conventions and etiquette and the ways of the world generally' (p. 52). At the same time, she reads critically, as a young woman, from what would now be called a feminist perspective. Her reading and discussion of *Sakuntala* is meant to indicate this. She has been trained to question and dispute with her grandfather; and in this way has had an entirely 'modern' education; she has been allowed to be 'free and fresh, like an antelope of the woods', as her grandfather says, although the texts she has read are entirely from Sanskrit (and Marathi?). Madhaviah gives her an eager and enquiring mind with the ability to reason. 'She had once declared against even the possibility of such a science (i.e. astrology), arguing purely on *a priori* grounds.' In short, she achieves a post-Enlightenment intellectual make-up, without having had a 'Western' education. Srinivasa Sastri's comment on this aspect of the novel is significant: 'That without English education she could early bring a fresh mind to bear on the characters

of legend and the perplexing problems of actual life around her is proof to me, welcome beyond words, that in indigenous culture at its best, you still discover the elements of courage, freshness of outlook and virility of purpose, so necessary for progress.'[25]

This early education is fundamental to the way Clarinda's character is developed. Although she is not allowed to decide whom she will marry (and indeed if she will marry at all), bound as she is by Brahmanic rules, Madhaviah makes it clear that her intellectual training will not allow her to accept passively the decisions made for her. Again, although her protest to the king against the proposal that she marry the Diwan is fruitless, Madhaviah would have us believe that it is her independence of mind and spirit—the outcome of her education--that enables her to survive a bad marriage that lasts for about six years, leaving her a widow.

It is to Madhaviah's credit that he is not coy in his treatment of Clarinda's sexuality. It is clear that the Diwan forces her to have sexual relations with him although she is deeply repelled by him. Her ambiguous feelings towards Madhava Rao are handled sensitively and openly—her fear and alarm at first; later, regret at what might have been; still later an irresistible and inevitable response to his passion; an acknowledgement of her desire, and at the same time, her consciousness of moral danger. Such self-awareness is also apparent when, at the prospect of widowhood, she thinks through all her options, one of which could certainly be to accept Madhava Rao as her lover, finally deciding to dedicate herself to fulfilling her grandfather's proposed charities.

Yet, when Madhaviah takes up the question of widow remarriage, he is very careful to attribute to Clarinda the noblest of motives. Madhava Rao too is now a widower, but could never countenance breaking caste rules. Clarinda, on the other hand, has been influenced by her discussions with Lyttelton and his reformist views; he has suggested to her

that Kamalabai's and the Amatya's plot was 'due to ignorance, to superstition and to effete caste rules and customs, as much as to greed and selfishness'. A second marriage will enable her to lead a useful and fulfilled future life in which 'duty' and 'responsibility towards others' will feature largely. At the same time, she also refers to her grandfather's words that there were authentic precedents for such re-marriage in earlier days. (Although Madhaviah does not give a direct reference to the *shastras* in *Clarinda*, his commonplace book contains a remarkable entry, to which he has given the title, 'Widow re-marriage': a verse from the Rig Veda, urging the woman who has lost her husband 'to come to the world of the living' and 'become the wife of him who holds your hand and is willing to marry thee.'[26] Madhaviah's translation of the same passage into Tamil is quoted in *Muthumeenakshi*—a marvellous example of the intertextuality between his novels, whether in Tamil or in English.)[27]

The treatment of widow-remarriage in *Clarinda* differs in one main respect from the way it is treated in the earlier novels. In the earlier novels, the widow is rescued from a life of degradation *(Muthumeenakshi)* or from the machinations of a Christian evangelist *(Satyananda)*. Clarinda, however, is not a victim waiting to be rescued: she makes her decision herself. Clarinda's bold initiative in proposing to Madhava Rao is also by way of putting him to the test: 'If therefore you really love me still, and are willing to devote your life to a task at once heroic and noble, break this unjust and cruel custom even as the holy endeavour to better our society and marry me and then by God's blessing we shall not only be happy in our mutual love, untarnished by any sense of humiliation or sin, but also strive our utmost to make the lives of our ignorant and less fortunate brothers and sisters nobler, brighter and happier than now' (p. 190). Of course, Madhava Rao has neither the intellectual nor moral stature

for Arcot, Anwaruddin. By 1763, the British had acquired a dominant political role in Tamil Nadu, and were in a position of control over the winning Nawab of Arcot, Muhammed Ali, son of Anwaruddin, to whom they were giving military as well as financial aid.

It is this tortured pre-colonial history that forms the background to *Clarinda*. The novel, though, views these events from the point of view of Tanjore, although it is actually telling a national narrative. It is clear that the Maratha Rajas of Tanjore struggled to keep their independence, but were caught in the cross-fire between the British and the French in their struggle for power. The subsequent identification of the British interests with Muhammad Ali, son of Anwaruddin was to prove disastrous to Tanjore. Always suspicious of Tanjore's loyalties, and afraid the Raja would ally himself with Hyder Ali or the Marathas, the British finally besieged Vallam, and captured it for Muhammad Ali in 1773. Although the Company's Court of Directors ordered the Raja to be reinstated in 1776, thereafter Tanjore became a protected state on condition that the Raja paid an annual subsidy of four lakhs to the British, and became an ally of the Company.

The exchanges between Pandit Rao, counsellor to the Tanjore Raja, and Lyttelton, newly arrived Officer of the Company, are a means of bringing the political encounters to a personal level. Pandit Rao tries to steer a sensible (and principled) course during difficult times. Yet he knows that it would be almost impossible for Tanjore to stay neutral and avoid both the British and the French (p.46). He distrusts the French more than the British. The French are 'bigoted and intolerant of our religion' and Dupleix 'ambitious and unscrupulous' as is Chanda Saheb. For him it is a matter of expediency for Tanjore to align itself with the English, recognizing it is now 'hopelessly entangled in the net' of the foreigners.

Through Pandit Rao, Madhaviah gives a shrewd summing up of the reasons why, as he sees it, the British were to 'have the whole of the sacred Bharatavarsha under [their] control, if not [their] direct sway' within the next 20 or 30 years: 'non-volatility' (in comparison with the French); perseverance; self-confidence amounting to self-conceit; and unity of purpose (in comparison with the local South Indian kingdoms and principalities; p. 76) There is an implied criticism, (in hindsight) both of the British and of Indians here.

The passage can be compared with the chapter called 'My Political Tenets' in *Thillai Govindan* where Madhaviah reflects on the impasse between Indians and the English at the beginning of the twentieth century. Through the sceptical Ramiah, Madhaviah critiques the lack of 'unity of purpose' in the 'self-constituted representative leaders' making up the Indian National Congress. For Ramiah, 'it is madness to ask for political privileges and freedom when we have enough social and religious reform work for at least two centuries'.[22] The more patriotic Govindan sympathises with the Indian national Congress, and wants better relationships with the British. But the British, he says, cannot think of Indians as their equals: they feared and resented the young whom they had educated mainly as administrative underlings, and who were now demanding political privileges. From Madhaviah's point of view, the same qualities in the English which helped them to build the Empire will also bring its downfall, while the same infirmities that allowed Indians to become colonized still need to be addressed before political freedom can be claimed. Clearly Madhaviah steers a difficult course. On one hand he admires the English for some of their qualities while deprecating their arrogance, and on the other, his instinctive patriotic pride is tempered by his criticism of the flaws he sees in his own people.

Equally interesting is the cultural and ideological

encounter between East and West as represented by Pandit Rao and Henry Lyttelton. These two meet for the first time when Lyttelton is hunting for tiger, and comes across Pandit Rao in meditation in front of his grotto, on the pathway from the ruined Srisailam temple down to the River Krishna. Even the physical stances of the two men are shown in stark contrast: the Sannyasi in the padmasana position; the European with a smoking gun in his hand. But they could also be said to complement each other. Pandit Rao, representing Hindu scholarship and wisdom at its best, has withdrawn from the world, to seek 'the company of God and Nature,' better company, he says than man. Captain Lyttelton, the European and man of action, (presented as 'wiser than most of his race') takes the Enlightenment and Christian line: 'Man is the noblest and greatest of God's creatures on earth, and be his hopes high or low and his activities noble or mean, we have to take him as he is, and make the best of him' (p. 30).

In their second encounter, Lyttelton is in the position of double deliverer. He has heroically put Lally's troops to rout and saved Tanjore and he has also saved Clarinda's life by sucking out the snake poison from her leg. In this encounter, Lyttelton, this time representing the rationalist and reformist West, critiques Brahman customs and attitudes towards women: early marriage, denial of divorce to women (but not to men); denial of re-marriage to widows (but not to widowers); and sati. Much of this is in line with Madhaviah's own position. But Madhaviah also presents Pandit Rao sympathetically, as a conservative, but a liberal conservative. He is not one to follow rules blindly, but is always prepared to subject them to 'reason and experience'. He looks upon the shastras from a liberal point of view. He is prepared to find shastraic authority for a more liberal attitude towards women which would accommodate reform.[23] At the same time the Pandit puts forward a metaphysical, profoundly

Hindu view. His argument is that *sati* is nowhere 'enjoined or commended', and that where it is undertaken willingly, there is no fear of death. Further, he says that according to Hindu thought, the pang of death is but momentary, it is 'a clear jump from one rung to another' in a 'ladder of innumerable rungs which reaches up to salvation' (p. 81).

The discussion between Pandit Rao and Lyttelton about issues to do with Hindu woman is placed in the book after a similar discussion between Clarinda and her grandfather, where Clarinda takes up what may be described as a progressive and feminist position, arguing against early marriages for women, and for equal relationships between men and women. Nobody teaches her a feminist perspective; she learns it herself through argument and disputation with her grandfather. Despite their very different and contrasting backgrounds, Clarinda and Lyttelton are in some ways aligned, and the romantic relationship prepared for. The personal encounter between them will also reflect the colonial encounter. Lyttelton will be the romantic deliverer and religious teacher, but in the end Clarinda will be morally and intellectually more than a match for him.

Clarinda: Women's Agency

Almost all Madhaviah's work springs from a criticism of the position of women in his own time, and this, in its turn, is an important aspect of his criticism of orthodox Brahman society.

Padmavati Charitram, 1899, is about two young men, Narayanan and Gopal, their marriages to Padmavati and Ḳalyani, and the conflicts and problems within those child and teenage marriages. In this and other novels, Madhaviah deals with the cruel and mercenary practice of buying child brides, domestic politics, and violence within marriages: subjects hardly ever taken up before his time. Madhaviah saw women's education as central to social and religious

to take up such a challenge. Clarinda has outgrown him, as eventually she will outgrow Lyttelton too.

A central invention and motif in *Clarinda* is the *sati* from which she is saved by the English Officer. The fiction explains romantically why a Brahman widow associated with the Tanjore Royal family would live with an English Officer. Of course we do not need so romantic an explanation; liaisons between English Officers and Indian women occurred quite commonly in the early days of the company. For Madhaviah, however, it is important that both Clarinda and Lyttelton are seen as entirely pure and noble-minded. His own version of their story is made clear from the epigraph that he chose: 'Blest are they/Whose sorrow rather is to suffer wrong/than to do wrong, albeit themselves have erred.'

At first glance, Madhaviah's romantic treatment of the episode seems to owe much to the colonial trope of the white man as chivalrous and romantic hero saving the distressed and beautiful Indian princess. Jules Verne's *Around the world in 80 days* (1873) is a version of what had already become a stereotype, Sunder Rajan suggests.[28] Lyttelton has been built up for this role from his first entry into the novel when he is shooting tigers, through to his role as the saviour, both of Tanjore and of Clarinda herself. (Lyttelton combines some of the daring and enterprise of his contemporary, Robert Clive, with certain qualities of Madhaviah himself—the physical daring, the expertise in horsemanship and the romantic temperament that M. Krishnan notes in his father.) At the same time, the trope is altered and complicated in many subtle ways; most of all by the character of Clarinda herself.

Sati was not a primary reformist issue in Madhaviah's own time, but it was, a century earlier. The proposed *sati* in *Clarinda* could have happened. Although there were far fewer instances of *sati* in the south of India than in the north, there were some. Abbe Dubois reports two that happened in the Tanjore royal family in 1801, amongst others.[29] Madhaviah is

known to have consulted Dubois, from the testimony of his daughter, Mukta. Of course he was writing more than a century after the supposed event. Thus he incorporates into his story what had by that time become known as certain typical features of *sati*: for example, dispute over property ownership being a chief cause, the use of drugs to subdue the woman, etc.

It is important to note that we are prepared for the enforced *sati* right from the start of the book. The novel opens with the exemplary *sati* of Muktamba, Clarinda's mother, who gives a single scream when she hears of her husband's death, and then dies immediately. This almost spontaneous reaction is seen as a 'true *sati*' by all; it is praised when it happens, and continues to be a kind of ideal for Clarinda. Again, in the discussion between Lyttelton and the Pandit (West against East) the old man says that *sati* was never intended as coercion, but in actually it becomes murder; he speaks of the voluntary *sati's* absolute faith that she will enter heaven with her beloved lord, and her total lack of fear because of this. It seems that Madhaviah wants to give expression to this side of the argument, as one possible ideal, even against the scepticism of Lyttelton for whom no *sati* is ever completely voluntary.

But when it actually comes to the point, the abstract *sati* ideal is shown to have no possible relevance to Clarinda herself. Clarinda recognizes that her marriage to the Diwan could in no way be described as a 'sacrament'. ('Whatever the world might think, no just God could regard such a union as a marriage-sacrament' p. 130. Madhaviah uses the term 'sacrament', in spite of its Christian connotations). She has already contemplated the thought of her widowhood, and *sati* has never been an option for her. When the Diwan actually dies, and she is faced with the possibility of *sati*, forced to consider the reality of the pain of burning, and death by fire, she recoils from the prospect with terror: 'Not that,

my God, not that.' The point is made very dramatically, that whether it is suicide (as Sona Bai proposes it) or attempted murder (as it becomes), sati must be seen as an act of violence. Clarinda's emotional reaction knocks down the theoretical arguments, and carries the novel close to Radha Kumar's argument that 'Even as suicide—*sati*-daha is tragic and exceptional, and should never therefore be ideologized as an ideal for Hindu (or any) womanhood, because such an ideologization is itself an act of force.'[30]

Later, Madhaviah describes the actual scene of the *sati*. Clearly drugged, Clarinda is forcibly dragged towards the burning pyre and placed on it. She shrieks, jumps or falls to the ground and is saved by Lyttelton, who arrives there, summoned by Sarada. Clarinda's terror at the prospect of pain (she would rather drink poison than be burnt, she has declared), and her actual experience of it make her react immediately. But Madhaviah has been at pains to portray her as a woman who has never been a passive and submissive victim. Therefore her attempt to jump off the fire is of particular significance. She is, of course, saved by Lyttelton, but she also acts for herself. Sarada's role in the rescue is also important.

The *sati* becomes the pivotal event on which the novel turns. Madhaviah sees it as a central moment in his development of Clarinda's character: a child with a brilliant, enquiring mind, who grows up, having suffered much, into a woman of independence and courage; who gradually takes control of her life, choosing to live with the man she loves, and who finally ends her life in 'noble service.'

Madhaviah presents the relationship between Lyttelton and Clarinda as one of idealized, romantic love, but doomed at the same time. In all his work, Madhaviah is concerned with promoting an equal relationship of mutual love and partnership within a traditional (but liberalized) marriage. Often he seems to be advocating education for women for

the sole reason that they can be the equals of their husbands, and achieve such a relationship. But he also explores the possibility of an ideal marriage of free choice, which might cut across caste and religion. Clarinda and Lyttelton could have had such a relationship, but circumstances forbid it; that is their tragedy. In order to preserve Lyttelton's best intentions while explaining the fact that Clarinda and he are not legally married, Madhaviah invents the fiction of a living, but insane wife, as in *Jane Eyre,* and who has gone mad for similar reasons. The deception that he practices on Clarinda, makes their 'marriage', inevitably, an unequal one.

Srinivasa Sastri, in his fine letter to Madhaviah, writes about the portrayal of romantic love in the book, 'I should hesitate to extend the psychology of love as we read of it in English men and women to Indian life. In places, that is what you seem to have done, and I frequently asked myself, "Is this true of us?"[31] In the relationship between Lyttelton and Clarinda—which she never doubts is a true marriage, solemnized by a sacramental rite—there is an idealized mutual love, respect and trust as between equals in a 'modern' sense. At the same time, Clarinda brings to the marriage the exceptional quality of love and devotion—as Madhaviah sees it—of an upper-caste Hindu wife. Madhaviah cannot quite solve this paradox: it is the rules of patriarchy that produce the perfect *pativrata;* yet the type of the 'loving and intelligent Brahman woman as wife' is applauded by him as unparalleled in the world. The long panegyric to the Hindu wife (pp. 211-212) is noteworthy. It is because of both these aspects in Clarinda as a character, (traditional and modern), that she reacts at first with moral indignation when the fraud that has been practised against her is revealed,[32] but also that she returns to Lyttelton voluntarily, in order to nurse him, after his attempted suicide and illness.

Clarinda: Christianity and conversion

Madhaviah treats the themes of inter-religious encounter and the problem of conversion to Christianity in three of his later novels: *Satyananda* (1909), *Clarinda* (1915), and the unfinished *Padmavati*. *Muthumeenakshi* also touches on the question. Before *Satyananda,* however, both in *Thillai Govindan* (1903) and *Thillai Govindan Miscellany* (1907), he wrote extensively about those aspects of popular Hinduism that he felt bound to reject, and certain central tenets of Hindu philosophy that he could not do without.

There is no doubt that Madhaviah was deeply impressed by Dr. William Miller, Principal of Madras Christian College, from the time he met him as a young student of 18. There are portraits of him, loving personal tributes, in both *Padmavati Charitram* and *Thillai Govindan*. All his life he corresponded with him and sought his advice and approbation. It was through him, in all probability, that he first encountered Christianity.

William Miller came to Madras in 1862 to head the school called 'Free Church of Scotland Mission Central Institution' founded by John Anderson in 1837. It was Miller who put forward the proposal that the Madras Christian College be set up, affiliated to the new Madras University which had been established in 1857; and it was Miller who became the first Principal of the College, in 1877. In his Prospectus, Miller wrote that the central aim of the college would be 'to promote an education that shall cultivate, expand and enliven the whole man—the conscience and the will, as well as the mere reasoning powers. With this view, all the branches of a liberal education will be so taught as to show their connection with the great central truths which alone make life worth living.'[33]

Miller belonged to an era of Hindu reform movements. Stephen Neill suggests that Vivekananda's plea for 'the mutual recognition of the spirituality of the East and the West', and for 'service without proselytism, fellowship

without aggression' had considerable influence on some missionaries of this period, and that Miller himself was a persuasive advocate for this new outlook.[34] During his years of service Miller was criticized because evangelization was not his primary object, although he always said it was his ultimate aim. He clarified this position constantly: 'We do not consider that the good the college does can in any way be tested by the number of its students who are baptized. We put no personal pressure to induce them to take that solemn step. We leave it, and it is known that we leave it to their own consciences to decide when the call to take that step has come to them.'[35] The whole of the new movement to provide a 'Christian education' was rather to be seen as a *preparatio evangelica,* which would lead inevitably to a change of heart and mind, whether the students actually called themselves 'Christian' or not. 'If Christian institutions . . . stood foremost, or among the foremost, especially if one of them should come to be accepted as the representative of Western thought, as the highest model of what a school of Western learning ought to be, there was hope that the whole new movement might be a *preparatio evangelica,* in other words, that India might be prepared by it to recognize the supply of all its spiritual wants in Him who, even when they know it not, is in some sense, "the Desire of the Nations".[36]

Miller is at pains to acknowledge the contribution of Hinduism and Hindu culture to the 'story of the world' side by side with the cultures of Greece, Rome, Israel and the 'Teutonic races'—and this is in striking contrast with the way an earlier generation of Missionaries, Bishop Caldwell for example, describe aspects of Hinduism.[37] Nevertheless, he called upon his students to engage personally in social and moral change within Hinduism, inspired by the ideal of Christ; to be aware 'that the living God is near to every man and that from Him every man may learn for himself what his special call, his special duty is.'[38] His biographer,

Kandaswamy Chetty also says that Miller's keen interest in the Social Reform movement was 'due to his feeling that it was an attempt to apply some of the ethical principles taught in the college to the social life of the people.'[39] In later years, the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association's lively debates and discussions on social issues were always held at the College's Anderson Hall.

In *Thillai Govindan* Madhaviah pays tribute to Miller's 'noble life of self-sacrifice and philanthropy', his 'immense faith in man and in the spread of knowledge', and to his personal kindness and generosity.[40] Clearly Madhaviah saw Miller as a mentor and exemplar. Perhaps too, Miller's life-style as well as his adherence to Christian principles influenced the strongly proactive reformist stance that Madhaviah took towards certain aspects of popular Hinduism. But in all his work Madhaviah is repulsed by coerced conversion; Miller's stated principle that the final step of conversion must be a matter of individual conscience is one that he too shares; the motif of the unscrupulous but zealous evangelist and missionary turns up again and again in the novels.

At the same time, Madhaviah's criticism of popular Hinduism springs from quite a different source from that of the Christian missionaries. In the semi-autobiographical *Thillai Govindan,* the protagonist becomes an ardent admirer, in his undergraduate days, of the freethinkers and atheists, Ingersoll, Draper, Bradlaugh and Annie Besant. He particularly seems to have enjoyed the polemics and rhetoric of Ingersoll. Later still, he read works by the scientist and humanist T.H. Huxley, and the sociologist Herbert Spencer. His severe condemnation of popular religious practices spring from a cast of mind trained by this type of reading as well, for example: 'Suffice it to say therefore that our popular religion consists mostly of crass and meaningless superstition, revolting cruelties and obscenities and stupid and wasteful tomfoolery; that it can

only debase and nowise elevate its devotees.'[41]

But Madhaviah moves on from this mainly critical position inspired by the rationalists to a more positive one. The entire narrative of *Thillai Govindan* is in a sense, to do with resolving the conflicting demands of community on the one hand, and individual will on the other, for an educated Hindu man of his time. In a world full of compromises, Govindan seeks a guiding principle which will be more fulfilling than mere 'iconoclastic reason'. The book leads up to the crucial chapter 18, where Govindan examines the four great religions of the world, in terms of his needs. He acknowledges that his is not the bhakta's temperament, pious and devotional. 'My quest was not to unravel the great mystery, or draw the veil from the unknowable; I only wanted some principle to guide me in daily life, a rudder to my bark which would not appear monstrous to my reason.' Significantly, he finds that workable guiding principle in the Bhagavad Gita's message. The whole of the relevant passage is worth quoting:

> George Eliot has said: 'A philosopher is the last sort of animal I should like to be; I find it enough to live without inventing lies to account for life'; and I was of the same opinion. Do thy duty, and do it with utter indifference to the fruits of action preached the *Gita* in one place and I felt that this alone could ensure peace of mind.[42]

It is most interesting that Madhaviah links himself to George Eliot here, for she too believed most passionately in doing one's duty without any recompense either in this world or in an afterlife, but motivated only by love and pity for one's fellows. In a well known passage Frederic W. H. Myers wrote:

> I remember how, at Cambridge, I walked with her once in the Fellows' Garden of Trinity on an evening of rainy May; and she, stirred somewhat beyond her wont, and

taking as her text the three words which have been used so often as the inspiring trumpet-calls of men—the words *God, Immortality, Duty*—pronounced, with terrible earnestness, how inconceivable was *the first*, how unbelievable the *second*, and yet how peremptory and absolute the *third*.[43]

But if Madhaviah, as a free-thinking Hindu finds himself reflecting in a very similar way to George Eliot, a post-Christian, on notions of duty, moral responsibility towards others, and what constitutes moral action, he also differs from her in a crucial way. Equally importantly, influenced by the Theosophical writings of the time, he finds himself convinced by the doctrine of Karma and reincarnation. To him, it is an almost scientific explanation of the seemingly haphazard existence of good and evil in the world. He also sees it as the finest and best foundation for ethics because of its insistence on personal responsibility. 'When there is the conviction in a man's mind that his condition in life is not the result of blind chance or destiny... but of his own past actions and present doings; that good for good and evil for evil is meted out most rigorously by an all-just and all-powerful law... there cannot be imagined a better foundation for ethics.'[44]

Thillai Govindan was written when Madhaviah was only 30. Although he would hold to the principles he worked out for himself in that book for the rest of his life, questions about the nature of religion and the problem of belief and identity continued to tease him. How far could one critique the practices of popular Hinduism or of the injunctions of Hindu society, and still remain a Hindu? On the other hand, if being a Hindu and a Brahman was as much a cultural as a religious affiliation, was it possible to change it? How far was it possible to alter and re-make a religion? The extent to which one's identity might be changed by religious conversion is a theme that haunts his later novels.[45]

Even in the early novel, *Muthumeenakshi*, the child-widow Muthumeenakshi, and Sundaresan who dares to marry her consider the alternative of becoming Christians when cast out and persecuted by their own Brahman community. It would provide a viable alternative community at least for their children, Sundaresan argues. In *Satyananda*, the hero, the illegitimate son of a Brahman woman, is baptized as a foundling, and brought up as a Christian. He learns the truth about his identity when he meets his mother at the age of ten. His religious identity always remains ambiguous; not so his cultural identity. When he studies the Sanskrit *shastras*, he thinks of them as 'my own inheritance'. If he can be called a Christian, it would have to be an extremely unorthodox one, who re- interprets Christianity to fit the doctrine of karma and re-incarnation; in the end he founds a new community and a new Samajam.[46] The problem comes up yet again in *Padmavati III* where Gopal considers becoming a Christian in order to marry Jane/Janaki, since Hinduism allows no place for conversion, nor will the Brahman community ever accept anyone not born a Hindu and a Brahman. Yet were he to convert to Christianity, then not only he, but his entire family and children must be excommunicated. Religion ought to be a matter of individual choice, and completely separate from one's cultural and social identity, Gopal says, echoing almost exactly Sundaresan's words.

Clarinda is the only novel that Madhaviah wrote in which a conversion to Christianity is treated with complete approbation. There is no coercion here. She is persuaded, but she is no easy prey: she has already been established at length as a highly intelligent woman, with 'advanced and unconventional opinions regarding the traditions and customs of her caste'. But what she accepts in Christianity and why is treated in some detail by Madhaviah, and plays an important part in his own continuing exploration of this theme. In *Thillai*

Govindan, what appealed to Govindan about Christianity was above all that religion's power of human sympathy, particularly as it is laid out in the Sermon on the Mount. But he rejects Christianity in the end because—as far as he is concerned—'it was badly hampered by a narrow interpretation and an undiscriminating claim to wholesale revelation'.[47] The point is taken up in greater detail in *Satyananda.* Satya, brought up as a Christian, is more and more alienated, later on, from 'Christian churchianity': by the narrowness, intolerance and dogmatism of certain missionaries. The Hindu Scriptures, on the other hand, appeal to him and capture his imagination, because of their 'world-wide tolerance'. He also admires the 'scientific manner' in which spiritual truths are investigated in them, and the 'unflinching boldness with which any line of reasoning was pursued to its ultimate issues'.[48] Like Govindan, Satya finds the doctrine of karma attractive because of its rational explanation of the existence of good and evil. He begins to believe that nothing that Jesus said conflicts with a theory of Divine Avataras, and that therefore Christ need not be seen as the single and unique revelation of God.

In *Clarinda,* it is almost as if the argument is deliberately put the other way around. Lyttelton knows the 'weakness' of Christianity is its inability to give a 'rational explanation of life and its problems'. Therefore, in their discussions, he urges instead, one of Christianity's strengths—its message of 'infinite sympathy and healing kindness'. Placed against the doctrine of karma, which is now presented as a 'relentlessly calculating dogma', always re-iterating the inevitability of cause and effect, there is instead, a message of 'comfort and hope and the promise of happiness'; a message which has a particular resonance for her, in her circumstances (pp.194-5). He does not challenge her intellect, but appeals to her emotion and imagination: he expatiates on the perfect life of Christ on earth, rather than tangle with the theological arguments

about Christ's divinity. Yet, he asks her to consider the life of Christ framed within the familiar Hindu concept of Avatar. When he does appeal to her reason, it is to point out the egalitarianism fundamental to Christianity, and its contrast with Hinduism in this regard. Finally he suggests Christian prayer—both shared prayer, and regular individual prayer. Madhaviah comments that prayer is possible only in certain states of mind, and perhaps not at all to some natures. Govindan, in *Thillai Govindan*, says much the same: a bhakta is born, not made. Clarinda, apparently, has an ardent and devout nature which both enables her to pray, and to feel a direct spiritual benefit from the act of prayer. Christianity appeals to Clarinda because of her particular circumstances, and her particular mental make up; and also because it is presented to her by a man who is to be respected for his exemplary life, and whom she comes to love. Importantly, she has already cut her ties with her community. But all the same, it is her own considered choice—not Lyttelton's—to be baptized a Christian.

Clarinda is a convinced Christian long before she is actually baptized. As shown earlier, the early records of the Church in Tirunelveli carry a story of her continued struggle with the Church patriarchy. But this is not the story Madhaviah was to tell. Madhaviah's Clarinda finally takes control over her life when she becomes a Christian, choosing a life of service, and continuing the work of charities she had already begun. Sastri's comment on her choice of vocation is interesting in this regard, because he sees it slightly differently: 'Of course, Clarinda's culmination as a social worker was possible in those days, only under Christian influence. I long for the time, not very distant, I trust, when it would be compatible with the respectability of an Indian grihini.'[49]

It is also of interest that Sastri compares her story with George Eliot's *Romola:* there is certainly that echo in Madhaviah's novel. Clarinda's emphasis on duty, her

responsibility towards others, her commitment to the alleviation of human pain reminds us both of Romola and of Dorothea Brooke. But it is surprising that Sastri did not refer to Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922), another Marathi Brahman and scholar, widow and Christian convert whose personal mission was the social welfare of women, particularly that of child-widows.

*

The story of Clarinda is an extraordinarily layered one: the historical events come to us through the perspective of 18th and 19th century missionaries, German and English. Madhaviah's *Clarinda* grows out of the vision of an early twentieth century reformist novelist. In the 'strange and remarkable' story of her life that he fills out with his imagination, he is able to see her as a woman who takes control of her life, and is therefore far freer, in the end, than any of his other heroines. In this way, she becomes an eighteenth century exemplar for the women of his own times.

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6. Held in typescript, undated, at the Bishop Stephen Neill Study Centre, St. John's College, Palayamkottai. Frederick James Western was Bishop of Tinnevelly, 1929-35.
7. When King Fredrick IV of Denmark decided to promote Christian missionary activity in the tiny Danish settlement in Tranquebar, on the Coromandel coast of South India, no missionaries could be

found in Denmark he turned to Halle in Germany, where the Pietist leader August Hermann Franck (1663-1727) was building up a centre of good works. Schwartz was possibly the most famous of the German missionaries of the Tranquebar Mission.

8. In historical contexts, I use Madhaviah's spellings for the place names Palamcottah (current Palayamkottai, Tinnevelly (Tirunelveli), Tranquebar (Tarangambadi) and Tanjore (Thanjavur). I use the modern spelling where appropriate.
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17. Caldwell, *Records*, p. 4.
18. Caldwell, *Records*, p. 6.
19. Appuswamy, 'Naavalaasiriyar A. Madhaviah', *Kalaimagal*, March 1979.
20. Madhaviah was deeply influenced by William Miller's exposition of *Othello*, but there is also an allusion in the text to the story of *Sarangadhara*, from which also he might have borrowed. See footnote to the relevant section.
21. Bayley in *Cambridge Encyclopaedia of India*, p. 110.
22. *Thillai Govindan*, p.147.
23. Cf. Ram Mohan Roy, who always provided references from the Hindu shastras to support his proposed reforms.
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39. Ibid., p. 57.
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41. *Thillai Govindan Miscellany*, in the *Madras Christian College Magazine*, July 1907, p. 18.
42. *Thillai Govindan*, p. 130.
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45. Gauri Viswanathan poses the question thus: what possibilities for alternative politics of identity might be offered by conversion as a gesture that crosses fixed boundaries between communities and identities?' (*Outside the fold*, p. xxvii, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1998).
46. Here Madhaviah is probably thinking of something similar to the Brahmo Samaj (founded in 1828), but without its emphasis on a 'church'.
47. *Thillai Govindan*, p. 167.
48. *Satyananda*, published by *The Mysore Review*, Bangalore, 1909, pp. 231-2.
49. Appendix 3.

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LAKSHMI HOLMSTRÖM

CLARINDA:

A Historical Novel

by A. Madhaviah

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Introduction

The reader will find this an old-world story though the characters themselves are not of hoary antiquity. Children of those who may have seen our heroine in her last days are, no doubt, still among us, the venerable centenarians of our time. A few score years count but as a day in the annals of this land, where in fixing the date of an ancient script or historic personage, learned savants sometimes agree to differ by several centuries, a period that would take us to barbarous and even prehistoric ages in the life-story of many an other nation. But English culture have during the past few decades, so influenced the customs, manners and thoughts of the people and so altered even the face of the country that, without some effort, the life and scenes depicted in the following pages cannot be fully realised.

The Tamil country wherein these scenes are laid is inhabited mostly by a Dravidian people, the Tamilians, who boast of one of the earliest civilizations known to history. They colonised this country long before it became Aryavartah. Their extant literature goes back to at least two thousand years, and while astounding us alike by its volume and supreme merit at that remote epoch, it refers clearly even then to a vaster empire and a more ancient civilization swallowed up by the advance of the insensible ocean. Not many modern nations surely could boast of literary academies and works of such rare excellence twenty centuries ago.

This ancient literature, mostly poetical, and the inscriptions, found all over the land tell us that Tamilagam, the land of the Tamils, consisted mainly of three Kingdoms,—the Chera, the Chola and the Pandya. Of this triarchy, the Chera Kingdom was separated from the rest of the country by a lofty range of mountains infested with wild beasts. It never attained imperial eminence or renown, but by reason of this very isolation, it was never subject to alien conquest, and flourishes to this day as the

Protected State of Travancore, while its prouder and more powerful neighbours have been wiped off the face of the globe and their very names have been forgotten. The meek have truly inherited the earth and the proud and the ambitious have been laid low.

The Chola and the Pandyan Kingdoms often contended for supremacy on the field of battle, and even more frequently emulated each other in arts and literature, promoting mutual amity by royal intermarriages and treaties. The earliest extant records depict them as flourishing side by side and ruled over by monarchs who claimed their descent from the sun and the moon. Orayur near Trichinopoly; Cauveripatam near the mouth of the Cauvery river, whose turbid waters make this part of the country one of the most fertile in all India, Karur, Conjeevaram and Tanjore were among the capitals of the Chola Kings; while prehistoric Kapadapuram, Korkai and Madura were the different seats of the Pandyans. It is claimed by the Court-bards of these Kingdoms that some of their monarchs stretched their sway to the Himalayas, not to speak of their over-running Indraloka, the abode of the Devas. While it may safely be presumed that these kings often owned no more than their capitals and their suburbs, recent archaeological research has more than justified the claims set up by their bards and borne witness to the civilization and commercial and nautical activities of the ancient Tamilians, and to their domination, at some remote epoch, over such far-off lands as Burma, Ceylon, Java and the Nicobars.

The Pandyan Kingdom seems to have been the more ancient of the two, and in some respects the more renowned: it was here that all the three Tamil Academies sat and judged aspirants to the laurel-crown; it was a part of this kingdom that was submerged by the sea; and it was here that the great God Siva enacted his playful miracles, and mingled freely with mortal men, even wedding a Pandyan princess and ruling her empire for her. The fame of the Chola Kingdom was no less magnificent, though of a later date; all the four great apostles of the Sivaite religion were born in it, as well as the greatest of Tamil poets, Kamban, who

graced the Chola Court; and in the exercise and culture of the fine arts, especially architecture and music, this kingdom was unrivalled. To be quite impartial, we should not fail to record here that the author of the learned and beautiful Silappadikaram was a princely ascetic of the Chera country, which also gave birth to the most daring and famous of Indian philosophers,—the great Sankara. But Kingdoms, like men, have their little day and cease to be in this impermanent world, and the Chola Kingdom was no exception. The Pallavas, the Chalukyas and the Ganga Pallavas, were the first invaders. They held their sway for four or five centuries, till the Cholas regained their independence in the ninth century A.D., and excepting short periods of temporary subjection to the Pandyas and the Hoysalas, continued to rule the country independently, attaining great national renown and achieving extensive conquests under many a Chola King famed in olden story and tradition, until they were finally, overcome by the Vijayanagar kings in the fourteenth century, and their very name disappeared for evermore from the pages of history. The Moghuls also overran the country about the same time and the Nayak kings at Tanjore were ousted by the Marathas in 1675 A.D. The Moghuls came again about the close of the 17th Century under Zulfakar Khan, and the Maratha King then agreed to pay the Great Moghul an annual tribute of four lakhs of rupees. This was the last native Government to rule over the ancient Chola country, and it ceased to exist in 1855 A.D., when the reigning Maratha prince died without a male issue.

It was when a Maratha king occupied the throne of Tanjore that our story begins. The Danes, the Dutch, the French and the English had already gained a footing in the land, and the last two powers had begun their historic contest for supremacy on the chess-board of the Carnatic, whereof the pieces were Nawabs, Rajahs and Polygars. Hyder Ali, the great and daring soldier of fortune, was a terror of those days and his was a name wherewith crying children were silenced. We shall incidentally refer to some of the events of those stirring times in the course of our narrative, but the reader will bear in mind that it is not history. One fact alone need be emphasised here:

the numerous invasions and changes of rulers rarely, if ever, touched the inner life and thoughts of the people. Political history exercised no appreciable influence on social history, and the life of the people continued much the same since the Dravidan settlement, what internal evolution there was having no reference to the occupants of the throne. But British rule that finally prevailed over the whole country early in the last century, worked a miracle in a few decades and changed both the face of the land and its inhabitants, more than they ever changed during twice as many; centuries before it. The railway, the telegraph, and the innumerable irrigation and other works of public utility and ornament have so transfigured the country; and the schools, colleges, newspapers, printing machines, post offices, hospitals, libraries, law-courts, mills, factories and the countless other accompaniments of western civilization, unbroken peace and a uniform and powerful administration, have so affected the lives, manners, habits, and the very thoughts of the people, that should the shades of our great-grand-fathers actually revisit us now during the annual ceremonies, they will hardly recognise the land of their birth, or their westernised posterity.

Our heroine was a historical character, and the appended account of the only few incidents of her life, now gleanable from contemporary records, will show how little is known of her strange and remarkable story, and how much remains to be guessed at, or imagined as each might choose. We have essayed in the following pages to present a more or less complete picture of her whole life, in a manner which we fondly hope will be considered neither improbable nor unprofitable. Says one of the greatest English men of Letters, Dr. Johnson:

"He who tells nothing exceeding the grounds of probability has a right to demand that they should believe him who cannot contradict him."[6]

But no such right is claimed.

A. Madhaviah

CLARINDA

"* * * * * Blest are they
Whose sorrow rather is to suffer wrong
Than to do wrong, albeit themselves have erred.
This tale gives proof that Heaven most gentle deals
With such in their affliction."[1]

To

The Hon'ble Mr. Srinivasa Sastri[2]

My dear friend,

This page alone will be new to you in this book.

Custom condones, or is it, demands, complimentary platitudes on such occasion; but I need not praise one chosen in Gokhale's stead.

Living our lives wide apart and meeting but rarely, we have still been drawn to each other by subtle bonds of sympathy, and our friendship bears witness to Thiruvalluvar's bold saying: — உணர்ச்சிதான் நட்பாங்—— — கிழமைதரும்-.[3] And among the fond visions which my fancy, peering through the veil of Time, would fain see in the dimly glimmering vistas of the near To-be, not the least pleasant is the strengthening of those bonds and the ripening of that friendship; nor was yours the least of the opinions[4] which have induced me to send forth my *Clarinda* into the world.

So is it that I have thus linked this child of my Fancy with your honoured name.

A PRAYER

Across the road to the north west of Christ's Church at Palamcottah is a small cemetery enclosed by a masonry wall. A wooden gate in the west opens on what is known as 'Old Church street'. At the north-western corner of the compound stands the church, a small plain room with a tiled roof, and door-ways on all four sides. The walls have been buttressed up later against the ravages of time; the roof now lets in the sun and rain; and the doors are always hospitably open to the cattle which graze within the compound.[5]

In unnamed graves in this cemetery, maybe in the two to the north-east of the chapel and close to the northern wall, marked only by a slightly raised platform over each, lie buried the mortal remains of Clarinda and of the Englishman who, despite his faults and follies, was no ignoble example of his great race, and who played no insignificant part in her chequered career.

The East and the West lie there side by side, and even the reader who sees nothing in this tale beyond a fanciful account of the lives of two distant representatives of the two great civilisations will, we hope, readily join us in the prayer:—

May their souls rest in peace !

CLARINDA

A HISTORICAL NOVEL

BOOK I

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will"[7]

CHAPTER I

THE HAVALDAR

The 4th of November, 1746, was a memorable day in the history of South India. On that day, and on the southern bank of the Adyar river, was fought the battle of St. Thome, in which the French engineer Paradis, with a small force of 230 Europeans and 700 sepoys and without even a single fieldpiece, put to a shameful rout a native army of ten thousand men with many guns, commanded by Maphuz Khan, the eldest son and heir of the Nawab of the Carnatic. In the words of an English historian, "the battle was won by boldness, by *elan*, by dash, by daring to affront danger, and it inverted the position of the European settler and the native overlord. Upto that time, the superiority of the latter had never been disputed by either French or English. The representatives of both nations had been content to be the vassals of the Nawab of Carnatic. The battle of St. Thome effected a revolution in this respect. To Europeans and Natives alike it was as the storming of the Bastille."[8]

On that day of disillusionment, and while the French engineer was yet wondering whether what his eyes witnessed was not a dream, ten thousand men abandoning their guns, and fleeing for their lives before a few hundreds without any artillery, four horsemen came rapidly towards the

southern gate of the Fort of Tanjore. Havaldar[9] Ragoji, the old captain of the guard, was the first to notice it.

"Look at that cloud of dust, Shere Khan," said he to the Naik of that name, "I'll bet my silver buckler which the late Maharaja gave me for saving his life, against any woman's trinket, that some horsemen are coming towards us, and in devilish hurry too. Warn the men, Naik; and let us be ready to receive them, whoever they may be, as the nautch-girls say during the marriage season."

"I think you are right, sir," replied the Naik,[10] "Your eyes are still sharper than the eagle's in search of his quarry, or a lover's scanning the crowd for his sweetheart during the Kandiri festival at Nagore. I shall go down and warn the men." Saying this, the Naik left hastily, perhaps afraid of having to listen once again to the story of the silver buckler.

"Ay, that they have to be, or old Ragoji will not be worth his salt", remarked the Havaldar complacently, resuming his clay pipe and directing his attention again to the new-comers. The Naik returned after a few minutes, and reported that he had warned the guards, and also informed the manager of the *Chuttram*,[11] in case the party should turn out to be strangers requiring food and lodging.

Havaldar Ragoji was a fine old Maratha soldier, strong, sinewy and straight as an arrow, short even for his race, and bearing the weight of sixty-four winters rather lightly. His stern masculine features and grizzled face were set off by a long scar near his right eye, the mark of the wound which had got him the silver buckler; but there was a merry squint in his left eye which sometimes gave him a droll look. His countenance generally looked grim and forbidding, that is, when the squint was not betraying the genial heart within him. He wore a white tunic trimmed with red velvet and fastened round the body by means of strings and knots; tight pantaloons; and the shoe-shaped Maratha turban with the

badge of his rank. His arms consisted of a short, curved sword, and a poniard with ornamented hilts.

The Naik was similarly accoutred, but his pantaloons were quite loose; his head-gear was distinctly Mussulman in shape, and his arms had plain hilts. He was a tall young man, thin and wiry, with delicate handsome features; and he formed a striking contrast by the side of the old and gnarled veteran.

"Perhaps they bring news from the Arantangi fort," said the Naik presently. "Our Pundit Rao's son may have given a good licking to the general of the Great Maravas."[12]

"You are ever the same Sir Hopeful, Shere Khan", replied the Havaldar with a low laugh. "You know as much of the world as I do of music; and you are equally happy in your ignorance. You make events to suit your own fancy. What do you know of the Ramnad Maravas, or their commander? They are born fighters one and all, and it is their country. Even a hare will turn round on a lion to defend its own. The Setupati[13] has, besides, a Dulavoy[14] now, who is a cunning devil, not easily to be beaten by a Brahmin stripling. Why should Brahmins leave off their priestly profession and take to arms? I know the Pundit Rao for more than fifty years, and we were school mates: he was a poor Brahmin boy in those days, not unwilling to chum with Raghava. But he soon left our school for the *Patasala*, to acquire that lore which is the wonder of the age now. I honour him for it and am proud he was once my school-fellow. He was tutor to our Maharaja and helped him to get the Kingdom, though he was only Tukoji Maharaja's[15] natural son. So he has the Maharaja's ear, even more than the Pradhanji,[16] they say, and I don't grudge it. He hates all the Feringhis and so do I.

But why should he abuse his power, and put his only son, a raw youth who would probably go into fits at the very sight of blood, at the head of this expedition? Why tempt

the devil and court ill-luck to himself and ruin to the country? They say that both the Pradhanji and the Senapati were against it, that the Maharaja refused his sanction at first on their advice. But the Pundit Rao's heart was set upon it, and he threatened to leave the Court and become a Sanyasi, a threat he has been holding out off and on since his wife's death, and so the Maharaja it seems yielded at last."

"But why should he wish it so much, sir?" asked the Naik, just to please his senior, "Why should the Pundit Rao send his only child to war in his old age when fathers cling to their children with more affection than ever?"

"The Pundit Rao is not content with his *Vedic* lore, but he also dabbles in astrology," replied the Havaldar: "and it seems that his son's horoscope promises him great military glory in his twenty-third year, just this year. So he thinks that his son will overcome the renowned Dulavoy; fancy that! I might easier hope to outwit him in the Vedas!"

"And do you not believe in astrology, sir?" asked the Naik, with a faint smile on his lips.

"I believe in *this*" said the Havaldar, catching the hilt of his sword, "and in *this;*" touching the crown of his head. "What Brahma has ordained, no one can change."

"And astrologers only profess to forecast fate." said Shere Khan. "They never pretend to shape or alter it. If it be Murari Raoji's destiny to achieve martial renown in his twenty-third year, why should he not rout the Dulavoy?"

"But astrology is such a quibbling and deceitful wanton," replied the Havaldar rising. "I don't object to such success crowning our arms, but I guess it cannot be the fate of the wily Dulavoy to be out-witted by a Brahmin youth. And from what I hear, it was not quite a lucky send-off that Murari Raoji had either; it seems he is likely to become a father very soon, and his wife shed bitter tears at his parting. And woman's tears— well, well; it is not my business. But look,

the party is quite near, and I think I see Venkoba and his black devil of a pony. There are only five of them, or is it four? They no doubt bring news from Arantangi. Let us go down and learn how the Pundit Rao's son has been playing the general."

Then the two men went down and walked out of the gate towards the fast-approaching horsemen. The party was well-mounted on sturdy Maratha ponies, but the men and the beasts seemed tired alike and covered with dust. The saddle-accoutrements were quaint, with more of coloured cloth and cotton-rope than leather, and more of brass than steel. The riders were dressed more or less like the Havaldar, but in addition to their swords and daggers, each had a long bow, a quiver of arrows and a shield covered over with buffalo-hide. The *Kalla*[17] guide had a lance nearly twelve feet in length, with a tuft of scarlet coloured horse-hair and a small bell attached; and two others had sharp pikes; one man alone, apparently the leader of the party, had a matchlock, and he was mounted on a spirited black pony, which seemed to be the least tired of the party. The horsemen showed no sign of slackening their pace, and so the Havaldar hailed their leader in the following words, when they came near. "Hallo! Venkoba! Whither so fast and how goes it with our new general?"

"Is that you, Havaldarji?" replied Venkoba drawing in the reins. "Keep quiet, you devil, nothing ever seems to tire you." And this he addressed to his pony which kept chafing and prancing,

"A noble pony! A beautiful pony!" said the Havaldar, going near the rider and patting the animal on the neck admiringly. He and the Naik then turned their steps and walked back alongside of the horsemen.

"But what is the news and how is our general?" asked the Havaldar again eagerly.

"Right glad is the news we bring, Havaldarji," replied Venkoba, "and famously has our general done already; but we have his strict orders that his great father and the Maharaja should hear the happy tidings first, not excepting even the Pradhanji or the Senapati. We cannot therefore tell it to you now, nor may we thus tarry in our journey, so near the goal "

The leader loosened reins, and the party trotted off into the fort before the Havaldar could hold any further speech.

"Said I not so, Havaldarji?" said the Naik in exultation, and this seemed only to add to the old man's chagrin.

"One should not halloo before one is out of the wood," replied he in an angry tone. "But look at this brat who treats me with such scant courtesy! It seems but yesterday that I taught him to string the bow and charge with the long spear; and I remember how I caned him one evening for stealing a pomegranate from my backyard, when he was just that height. And this to *me*, who am old enough to be his grandsire! Surely, *Kali* is fast ripening and the end of the world is not far off!"

Shere Khan tried to pacify the old man by appealing to his sense of discipline and the necessity for implicit obedience in military affairs. The two men then walked towards the palace to learn the news and satisfy their baffled curiosity.

CHAPTER II

THE KING IN COUNCIL

The throne-room in the Tanjore palace was a stately and magnificent chamber, lighted up by a number of splendid chandeliers, lusters and many-tinted picturesque lamps hanging from the painted ceiling. The walls were adorned with paintings illustrating Maratha history and with portraits of all kings beginning with Shahji, the father of Venkaji.[18]

The main entrance was in front, but there was also a side-door from the inner apartments. There was a platform at the inner end of the chamber, of polished ebony inlaid with ivory, about two feet high and ten feet square. On this eminence was placed the throne, a high chair with four ivory lions for the legs, richly upholstered in scarlet and blue velvet, with golden embroidery work and pendants of costly pearls. There was a gilded canopy over the dais, arched gracefully on the four sides and resting on twelve fluted pillars of exquisite workmanship, three at each corner. The four arches of the canopy were fringed with pendants of small spear-heads made of fine gold-plate, which waved incessantly and dazzled as they moved. The dais had two steps to it, one of black and the other of white marble, both beautifully polished. A life-size painting of Sivaji in the act of tearing out the entrails of Afzul Khan[19] with his hidden tiger-claws covered the wall just behind the throne, and higher up was a fantastic representation of the goddess Kali,[20] mounted on a fierce-looking lion and spearing the demon Mahishasura. In front of the dais, and over the bright green carpet covering the floor of the chamber, was spread a white cashmere shawl, with a border of red lotuses worked in silk thread and a monster lotus nearly three feet in diameter in the centre, light blue in colour and of delicate workmanship. On either side of this shawl were placed four cushioned seats upholstered in crimson silk, each two feet square and less than a span high. The side entrance from the palace had an embroidered silk curtain, while on each side of the richly carved front door-way which was now open, stood a huge and fierce looking Maratha soldier in a gaudy uniform, and with his sword drawn.

The Pradhan or prime-minister, the Senapati or generalissimo, the Pradwivaka or chief-judge, the Dewan or finance-minister, and the Purohita or chief-priest were assembled there in obedience to an urgent summons from

the King. They were standing together near the main entrance, conversing in low tones. They were all elderly men, except the Dewan who looked well under forty; and all Marathas, except the chief-judge who was a Tamil Brahmin. They wore the prescribed durbar-dress—silk-bordered white loin-cloth, a long-cloth, a long robe of blue silk with gold braid, a white gold-laced cloth tied round the waist and over the robe like a belt, and a gold-laced turban of red silk; their feet were bare, and all but the chief-priest and the chief-judge wore large moustaches and whiskers.

"If it be news from the seat of war," said the Senapati Mankoji,[21] "how is it I know nothing of it yet? Surely, I ought to get the first report". Mankoji was an able and ambitious soldier, who aspired to become a great statesman.

"My information is that the Pundit Rao has received a message from his son and we have been thus summoned to hear it; but what the news may be, I do not know and cannot even guess," replied the prime minister, an astute Brahmin, who was reputed to be the richest subject of the king, and was certainly an ideal courtier.

"Then why does he not come and let us hear the news?" asked Dewan Ramanna Pundit, another Maratha Brahmin, testily; "and why does his son, who is after all only a *hazaridar* under the Senapati, write to his father about military affairs, and not to his chief?"

"Echo answers, why," remarked the judge sententiously.

"Like father, like son", put in the Purohita in his turn.

"When did a Pundit Rao, whose duty is no more than to expound the *Dharma Shastras*,[22] ever before usurp the power of all the other ministers and command the confidence of the Maharaja more than the Pradhanji himself?"

"Even walls have ears in this chamber, and I notice that one of the sentries is trying to overhear our conversation,"

observed the Pradhan. "Let us go in farther and speak lower." And the party moved nearer to the throne.

"What will become of us if the Pundit Rao's son overcomes the Dulavoy and returns a conquering hero!" exclaimed the Senapati. "His arrogance is well-nigh intolerable now, but with such a feather added to his cap, we shall have to give up our berths and go away elsewhere."

"But how can Murari Rao, who was conning the Vedas by rote till the other day and whose only ambition was to become as learned as his father, suddenly become a brave warrior and wrest the country from the Great Maravas and the Dulavoy?" exclaimed the Dewan. "It is impossible; it can never be; and if the stars at all speak true, this very expedition will bring about the Pundit Rao's down-fall, instead of adding to his power as the Senapati fears.

"I can't understand," said the Pradhan, "why such a shrewd prince as the Maharaja dances so readily to the Pundit Rao's piping. Grant that he was his tutor for many years and that his influence and scheming got him the throne, though, God knows, how much the Senapati and myself worked for it; still, what is the use of sitting on a throne under such perpetual tutelage? I am almost inclined to credit the popular rumour that the Pundit Rao has bewitched him."

"Chola Chakravarthi Maha Rajahdiraja Maharashtra Veera-siromani Sri Pratap Singh Maharaj Bahadurki Jai!" announced the herald in a thundering voice, and almost in the ears of the startled ministers. The silk curtain had already been drawn aside, and Maharaja Pratap Singh, the King of Tanjore, entered the durbar-hall and slowly walked towards the throne, returning the salutations of his ministers with a pleasant smile. He was a handsome young man of middle height, inclined to be stout, and rather plainly dressed for a king. His Amatya, or private-secretary, Venkanna Pundit, who was the younger brother of the Dewan and had a crafty

looking sinister countenance, closely followed his master, and stood behind the throne. Then entered by the same doorway a tall, clean-shaven old man, with a spare frame and an austere countenance, and a forehead furrowed deep by the lines of care and thoughtfulness. He had a self-communing, pre-occupied air about him, but when he turned his deep-set piercing eyes on any one,—and he scanned the face of each of the ministers as he entered,—he seemed to read the inmost workings of the mind like an open book. His thick and shaggy eye-brows were always knit close together as if in deep thought, and he was never known to laugh or indulge in light or frivolous talk. This remarkable man was not dressed like the other ministers, but had, besides his loincloth, only a light gray shawl covering the upper part of his body.

The king sat on the throne, and asked his ministers to be seated. The five ministers, whom we have already mentioned, then seated themselves on the cushioned seats on either side of the dais in front, leaving the first seat on the left side vacant. But the old man, for whom the seat was evidently kept vacant, advanced slowly and seated himself on the dais itself, to the right side of the throne, saying apologetically that he hoped the Maharaja and his friends would overlook the informality of his dress and his sitting aloof, on account of pollution.

"Sitting aloof indeed!" murmured the Senapati inaudibly, "perhaps he will next order another throne for himself on the dais."

"And that reminds us," said the king, "that we have a pleasant task to perform to-day, before we proceed to the purpose of this meeting. We are sure we are one and all happy to congratulate our beloved Pundit Rao on the birth of a granddaughter this morning.[23] We heard with regret that the happy mother was not doing well, but we have no doubt

that the thrice gladsome news we have since received of her husband's achievements will cheer her heart and bring about her speedy recovery."

"We are indeed very happy to congratulate him on the event," said the Pradhan on behalf of his colleagues. "It is all due to the grace of Mahadev and the good-will of the Maharaja and my friends," replied the Pundit Rao in a slow and measured tone. "This is the first child born in my house since the birth of Murari twenty-three years ago, and I confess it gladdens my old heart. The health of the mother,—she is my own niece as you are all aware, and was brought up by me as my own daughter,— is however, far from satisfactory, and I request you all to add your prayers to mine for her recovery, and may Mahadev be pleased to shower His choicest blessings on the child."

"Amen!" cried the chief-priest in a solemn tone. "A happy thought occurs to us now," said the king. "We cannot better commemorate the glorious feat of arms done by our friend Murari Rao early this morning at Clavirundapuram than by naming his new-born child after the village. Let she be named *Clavirunda Bai*,[24] to remind us of her father's unique bravery and achievement."

"It is a happy idea," exclaimed the courtiers with one accord, and the Pundit Rao thankfully accepted the royal suggestion.

Senapati Mankoji could not contain himself any longer, and he requested that the tidings from the seat of war might be announced to them, so that they too might rejoice in it.

"We summoned this meeting of our councillors to inform them of the happy news and to decide about further steps," said the King. "Our general, Murari Rao, with a party of only two hundred men, marched fifteen miles last night, leaving the main army at Arantangi, on secret information given by a deserter from the enemy's ranks. He surprised

the Ramnad Dulavoy in the small hours of this morning at Clavirundapuram, where he was encamped with only a score of men in advance of his forces. Taken thus by surprise, the Dulavoy has surrendered himself unconditionally to our general. Our ministers, who had grave misgivings about this expedition, will no doubt be glad to learn that it is so soon and so successfully over, and that Murari Rao has fully justified his father's confidence and expectation."

"It is indeed happy news!" exclaimed the prime minister.

"But has the main part of our forces joined the general since?" inquired Mankoji eagerly.

"No," replied the Pundit Rao. "Murari deemed it unnecessary to put the army to a troublesome march, but he himself would have rejoined it ere now, with the Dulavoy as his prisoner. The men who came two hours back left Clavirundapuram soon after the Dulavoy's capture this morning."

"But what would happen," inquired the Senapati again, "if the Great Marava forces reached Clavirundapuram before he left it, or overtook him on his way back to Arantangi? I suggest this not to question the discretion of the commander on the spot, but rather because, as we all know, the Dulavoy is a daring leader, and not a green-horn to be trapped so easily."

"Murari's information was that the Dulavoy ventured as far as Clavirundapuram only for the night, to offer a sacrifice at the temple there for the success of his arms;" replied the Pundit Rao, "and so Murari's action was a real and sudden surprise, and the Dulavoy was surrounded with all his suite, not a soul escaping. His army, according to our scouts, was at least thirty miles farther away, and he would therefore have been safely brought to Arantangi, long before his forces could learn anything about it."

"It is the very source of the information that makes me

so apprehensive," rejoined the Senapati, "knowing the wily Dulavoy so well as I do. But let us not anticipate any evil."

"There is indeed no occasion to fear anything, or to talk of evil," replied the Pundit Rao hastily, "and I am sure the next messenger, who may come in any moment and even before we disperse to-night, will confirm everything. The Senapati's present fears will then be proved to be as groundless as his misgivings when Murari was nominated to the command of this expedition. But let us consider how we may deal with the refractory and troublesome Great Maravas who have always been a thorn in our side and have again dared to overrun our possessions in the Pattukota *prant*, north of the Pambanar river. This Dulavoy is their mainstay now, and having captured him, we can dictate our own terms to the Setupati."

"We may as well wait till the bird is safe in our hands," remarked the Senapati drily.

"I think we may do so;" put in the Pradhan. "After all the delay cannot be much, as the Dulavoy will be brought here in two or three days, and we may hear him on behalf of his master, the Setupati "

"There is no need for any delay or to consult the Dulavoy," replied the Pundit Rao impatiently. "It is for us to dictate and for him to obey now, and the present Setupati is a mere puppet in his hands. The Pattukota *prant* was conquered by us nearly sixty years ago,[25] and though for a time it was re-occupied by the Great Maravas, the territory north of the Pambanar was finally incorporated with this kingdom sixteen years since,[26] when the Great Marava country was settled in the time of Kutta Thevar, the present Setupati's father, and the Sivaganga Zemin established. But since the death of Kutta Thevar, this Dulavoy has been carefully husbanding the resources of the country and training the army, and his attitude has been all along hostile

to this kingdom. He aided and incited the Nawab[27] against us, and he refused to help the Madura prince when required by us, with the result that Vangaru Tirumala Nayak,[28] the successor of the great Pandyan kings, is now a humble dependant at the Nawab's court, living miserably on a monthly pittance. He has also been prejudicing our interests with the Little Maravas of Nilakota and the Tondaman. And more than all this, he has now suddenly invaded and occupied part of our territory north of Pambanar. I therefore propose that this traitor should be put to death, or kept in close confinement here in our Capital, and that an officer should be sent by us to rule the Great Marava country, with the Setupati as nominal head, as he is presumably unable to rule over his territory properly."

"And he will have to thank himself for it," observed the king; "what says our Pradhan to this?"

"It is true the Setupati merits such a fate," replied the Pradhan cautiously, "but....."

"But, what?" demanded the Pundit Rao, interrupting.

"We have to consider," continued the Pradhan slowly, "how the Nawab, the English, and the French will view such a step."

"What have the Nawab and the Feringhis to do with it?" replied the Pundit Rao warmly. "The Great Maravas are our vassals, and an overlord has every right to punish a feudatory's misdemeanour. Does the Nawab consult us when he dismisses or punishes any of his men? What has he to do with our internal policy, as long as he gets the tribute? And as for the foreigners, do they not pay us now a poll-tax of five fanams on entering our territory even on mercantile business? What right have they to any voice in this matter?"[29]

"The Pundit Rao cannot be unaware," said the Senapati, "what an influence the Nawab exercised in the internal affairs of this kingdom till very recently, during the recent troubles

and the minority of the throne. Whether we like it or not, he is still our suzerain[30] to whom we pay an annual tribute. The last occupant of this throne was, though an usurper,[31] still the king of the country for the time being, and yet a servant of the Nawab dared to stab him to death with immunity in broad daylight and in this very hall, for an alleged insult to his own dignity. And we should not forget that it was by the Nawab's sufferance, if not with his help, that your Majesty ascended the Musnud; nor the influence of Syed Saiyid[32] till he was, luckily for us, murdered."

"The Pundit Rao admits," put in the Pradhan, "that the Setupati is a favourite with the Nawab. Is it likely then that he would acquiesce in the drastic measure now proposed against the Setupati, merely because we have got his Dulavoy in our hands?"

"It is time this kingdom should once more assert its original independence," replied the Pundit Rao vehemently, "and shake off all ignominious outside influences. I know the Nawab will try to interfere, but we should resist it; and I hope we are strong enough to do so, especially as his own hands are full just now with other and more important affairs."

"Surely we need fear no one in exercising our own legitimate rights," chimed in the king.

"If indeed we punish the Dulavoy for his treachery towards us, why should we deprive the Setupati of his right to appoint another in his stead, and why should we take upon ourselves the administration of his territory?" demanded the Senapati. "No doubt, Your Majesty is his overlord by right of conquest," continued he, "but we should not unjustly forget that the Setupatis of Ramnad were ruling that part of the country for many centuries before this Maratha Kingdom was ever thought of or founded.

The king turned mutely towards the Pundit Rao.

"I am glad to note that the Senapati has at last become a champion of justice and equity," observed the Pundit Rao in a sarcastic tone, "but I must confess that I never expected to hear such daring and unpatriotic sentiments expressed in this august presence. I may however inform the Senapati that I *have* considered that aspect of the question too, and that I have deliberately rejected it. The present Setupati being what he is, it will only lead to incessant scheming and trouble. The Great Marava principality will not cease to exist as a separate unit, as seems to be feared; only it will be ruled by an officer appointed by the Maharaja and directly responsible to him, until the time the Setupati is able to manage it properly himself. Such a step will confirm our sovereign-right, and form an invaluable precedent in dealing with our vassals generally."

"I see how the wind blows only now", murmured the Senapati to himself, "and I can guess the viceroy too. Who should rule a country, but the conqueror of it? But let him catch the Dulavoy first."

At this stage, the herald, who had retired soon after the King had taken his seat on the throne, returned and whispered something to the Amatya, who then announced that another messenger had arrived from the seat of war and was awaiting the royal pleasure. He was ordered to be brought in at once, and we shall hear his news in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

A BOLT FROM THE BLUE

The messenger was no other than an officer on the personal staff of Murari Rao, and his appearance was enough to alarm the stoutest heart. His clothes were covered with dust and blood, and his left hand was a bleeding stump. He looked

very faint and exhausted, and he explained with difficulty that he had to run for the last mile, his horse having dropped down dead outside the city. He had gone direct to the Pundit Rao's house and had been followed from there by a large and increasing concourse of people whose wails and cries were now audible even inside the palace. He bowed low before the King, and on being bidden to report his message, he began with wishing that his tongue had been cut off before its having to narrate such a tale. Then he told the King and his ministers, that the secret information given by the *Kalla* deserter was only a ruse and a decoy, and the Dulavoy's ready surrender a mere trick to avoid unncessary fighting and to gain time. The Ramnad forces reached Clavirundapuram by day-break after a forced march by night, and completely surrounded them. The Dulavoy then offered them their lives if they would surrender unconditionally, as he had done at first, but Murari Rao at once drew his sword and rushed on the Dulavoy, calling on his men to do likewise and make an effort to cut their way through and escape if possible, or perish nobly. A desperate and close fight then ensued, but was soon over owing to the superior numbers of the enemy, Murari Rao and all but a dozen of his followers fell sword in hand and were hacked to pieces. Of the few who escaped on horseback, he and another came direct to Tanjore, after sending the rest to Arantangi to apprise the main army of the disaster. The officer ended by saying that he feared for the main army at Arantangi, which might have been surprised and perhaps even captured by the Dulavoy. The Pundit Rao was visibly affected at the beginning of this woeful tale; but when he heard that his only son, the pride of his old heart, the sole heir to his immense fortune, and the centre of all his ambitious schemes and hopes, had been hacked to pieces, he bent his head and hid his face in the shawl, remaining so during the rest of the narration. There was an awful silence when the messenger ceased speaking,

and every eye turned involuntarily to the old man who sat there with his face in his hands, convulsed by sobs. The event might prove a great national calamity, but that view of it was not thought of then even by his avowed opponents, in the presence of the great sorrow of the all-powerful minister, whose masterful will had seemed all but superhuman a few moments before. Never had the instability of human affairs and the vanity of mere human hopes and ambitions been so forcibly and so terribly illustrated within the experience of any one in that assembly. It seemed as if the very gods had grown jealous of the power and pride of the old man and had purposely held out a crown of immortal glory over his brows, just to dash it on the ground in the vile dust, when he was about to seize and wear it. His cup of sorrow seemed full to the brim now; but it was not so, and yet another cruel draught awaited him. While all eyes were watching his mute agony in painful suspense and none had yet ventured to break the silence, a servant of his house entered the chamber hastily through the side-entrance from the palace. On being questioned by the King, he reported that on learning the news of her husband's death, Murari Rao's wife screamed and fainted, and that the Court-physician who was in the antechamber, rushed into her room, only to find that she was dead. Every one present was simply stunned at this further and equally sudden calamity, and experienced a vague sense of terror at what looked like a veritable visitation of divine displeasure. But there was also a murmur of approval from some who exclaimed involuntarily: "A true *Sati!* A true *Sati!*[33] Heaven be praised!" On hearing this news, the old man removed his hands from his face, which looked ghastly and haggard now and seemed to have aged a dozen years in about a few minutes, and turning towards the servant, he said in a broken tone: "And has *she* too gone then, and have they left the old man all alone in this world? Thrice happy she, a true *Sati,* a noble *Pativrata*[34] who- could

so join her beloved lord at her will. But I, — my heart is of stone and my life is held by a chain of steel, in spite of the wearisome years, and I linger here and cannot follow her noble example. What heinous and horrible sins I must have committed in my past births to merit such a fate! O that my sinful eyes should witness this day and still retain their light! Let the day perish wherein I was born; let darkness and the shadow of death stain it. Let that day be blotted out for ever from the annals of this land. And let the cruel gods who have ordained me such a fate in my old age....."

"Blaspheme not, Sir," exclaimed the King, interrupting: "it is indeed hard to bear for any one, but it ill becomes your age and wisdom to give way to grief, so far as to blame the Almighty. How often have you not taught me that we who gladly welcome all things good and pleasant should not wonder or feel aggrieved when any evil befalls us; that the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; that the truly wise man is he, who, in the words of Sri Krishna, neither rejoices in obtaining what is pleasant nor sorrows in suffering what is unpleasant, but looks upon all joy and woe alike! Great is your calamity and beyond the bearing of common men, but what avails your superior wisdom if you too thus give way to sorrow? Your only son and my best friend is dead, but he died gloriously, fighting for his country, preferring noble death to dishonour. Where is the soldier who doth not envy him and who will not do the same himself in like circumstances? I shall be as a son unto you, as indeed you have been not only my *guru* and my trusted minister but also a second father unto me all these years, and you shall remain with me, here in my palace, and help me to rule this kingdom which has sustained a severe blow by this most unhappy and unexpected event. Bear up, Sir, and promise that you will remain with me here; I shall be as a son unto you and make you forget, if possible, your great sorrow."

The King had left the throne and was sitting on the dais by the Pandit Rao's side, his arms round his shoulders, while speaking these words of comfort. "Thou art a good one, Pratap," said the old man feebly, laying his hand on the king's head and addressing him as in the old days when he was his pupil. "Thou art a good one and long may you live and reign over this kingdom! And I thank you humbly for your timely rebuke which has saved me from sin to-day. I loved them much, Murari and Muktamba; and it was so sudden, and so cruel, one after the other, that I forgot myself in my grief. God bless you for your kind words, but I am afraid that my courtier days are now over for evermore. The only favour I shall ask of you will be to dispose of my vainly hoarded wealth in suitable charities, but there is no hurry about it. You have able ministers and you can yourself govern well and wisely. Be not displeased therefore that I thus decline your generous offer. Let me go home now to discharge that duty towards the dear departed, which I was fondly hoping, they would one day discharge for the benefit of my soul. Let the Senapati proceed to Arantangi at once with a suitable force and remedy this dire disaster".

So saying the old man rose and slowly walked out to his palanquin which was waiting at the portico, followed in silence by the King and the other ministers.

CHAPTER IV

FOR AULD LANG SYNE

It was the occasion of the opening of a new *Chuttram*, called from its locality the Vennar Chuttram, by Maharaja Pratap Singh. His mother, whom he loved dearly, had died the year previous, and though the finances of the kingdom were far from flourishing, he had built the *Chuttram* to appease her soul and speed it in the path of salvation. More than a thousand Brahmins were sumptuously feasted during the

course of the day, and milch cows, cloths and other valuable presents given to many of them. The king himself was present in the evening with all his retinue and paraphernalia, to receive the felicitations of his subjects on such a meritorious act, and to witness a display of fireworks. The city wore a festive appearance: the streets were decorated with flags and festoons, and lofty arches spanned them at frequent intervals, picturesquely covered with bright fantastic tapestry and garlands of variegated flowers and gracefully waving palm leaves. Not a house-front but displayed its scores of tiny brass lamps, and the palatial mansions of the rich and the powerful vied with each other in gay pomp and brilliant illumination. Swordplayers, wrestlers, jugglers, musicians, and dancers, men and women, entertained the people in different places. Stately elephants, rickety and unseemly camels, huge bullocks with dewlaps almost touching the ground, and prancing horses, all gaily caparisoned, paraded the streets, followed by crowds of admiring rustics and urchins. Numerous native bands and renowned pipers and drummers filled the streets with music, and itinerant vendors of sweet-meats and children's toys had a brisk trade in their wares. In and around the new edifice, puissant voices of hundreds of well-fed Brahmins uniformly chanting the *Vedas* rose high like the roar of the mighty ocean and drowned even the thunderous din of the royal drums.

At the junction of two highways near Manambuchavadi, a swordsman who had recently come from Maharashtra, was playing with a huge double edged sword in such hand, dancing to the stirring music of two drummers and poising a lemon on the bare crown of his head all the time. An admiring crowd, mostly sepoys, was watching him in a ring several deep, vociferously applauding from time to time, some feat specially difficult or dangerous. At the outer fringe of this crowd, stood Havaldar Ragoji on his toes, keenly watching the performance, and freely commenting on its

merits with all the zest and excitement of youth. He was not in his uniform, but in a bright gala dress; and he was straining every muscle in his legs and neck to overcome the disadvantage of his stature and position. A beautiful girl about three years of age,[35] gaudily dressed in silk and silver lace, was seated across his right shoulder. Her hair hung about her in thick, black curls, and she often shook her head like a puppy that has just come out of water, to shake the unruly locks off her eyes, which were very dark and far too large for her face. She kept herself steady in her high perch by clutching at the Havaldar's red turban with both her hands, and in trying to dance to the music of the drums, she lustily thumped him on his chest and back with her legs. Another girl, two or three years older and far from handsome or richly clad, was standing by his side, holding his left hand in her right. She frequently complained to "Baba" that she could see nothing of the fun for the crowd, and begged him to lift her up too and show her whatever there was to see; but absorbed in admiring the swordsman's feats, "Baba" paid no heed to the activities of either of his young companions. His attention was however presently drawn by the little girl who suddenly screamed and clung to him in a fright. Turning round, he observed that a horse, which had evidently thrown off his rider, was madly galloping along the road, and that in trying to escape from that beast, one of the spectators had heavily trodden on the girl's feet. He was an old Brahmin with unsteady bandy-legs, a lateral gait, and a circumference about the middle which seemed equal to his height.

"Have you no eyes, Sir?" demanded the Havaldar angrily. "How foolish of God not to have fitted a pair of eyes to your nether brackets too!"

"Do not be angry;" replied the Brahmin. "I was trying to avoid that mad brute and did not notice the child. But..... What! Is that really you, Ragoji?"

"And where have you been all these years, Ramasastrulu?" exclaimed the Havaldar, no less surprised at thus meeting his old friend and schoolmate after many years; "When did you return from Benares? Why, some of us thought that you would never return; it was said that the crocodiles in the Ganges had got an indigestion over you."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" laughed the Brahmin heartily. "But you see I am not dead; and as was just now proved, I am so very loath to die too. But come, who is this little lady in such a costly dress? You must have got an immense booty in one of your battles to dress your grand-daughter in such silks, Ragoji!"

"She is not my grand-daughter, but of our old friend, the late Pundit Rao."

"Why, is he not the Pundit Rao now? Is he dead?"

"As good as dead, and perhaps really so. But when did you return from Benares that you seem so ignorant of what even a child knows in Tanjore?"

"I returned only last evening."

"Just in time for the feast and the presents! Well, you Brahmins are acute!"

"So it looks, but believe me, I knew nothing of this affair; and since going to Benares, I have left off the priestly vocation and do not eat any food cooked by others. I didn't attend the feast to-day, or accept any gifts, though the Purohita, hearing of my return, specially sent for me and offered me a milch cow and a shawl. But tell me, what about the Pundit Rao and why is his grand-child with you? Is this little girl then, whom I hurt just now, your grand-daughter?"

"Yes, Kaveri is my grand-daughter: you know my son Raghunath, don't you? He is Havaldar in my place now, and she is his daughter: he has two more little mites, a boy and another girl."

"Then, are you not in the army now?"

"No, not for these three years. Come, let us sit for a while in that *Mantap* and talk of the old days, and I shall tell you all about it. It is now, let me see, eleven years I think since we met last?"

The two men then repaired to an adjoining *Mantap* where there was no crowd, and Ragoji set down the little child, and told the two girls to play together and watch from there the sights in the street. Then he and Rama Sastrulu sat on the steps and stretched their legs lazily, intent on a long chat.

"Then, have you heard no news of us at all since you left for Benares?" asked the Havaldar, wishing to know first where to begin.

"I heard at Haridwar, from some *bairagis* who came there after a pilgrimage to Rameswaram, that the Pundit Rao's son was killed in battle by the Setupati's general, and that our Senapati then took the field and routed the Great Maravas. But I heard nothing about the Pundit Rao himself."

"Well, this little girl was born on the very day her father was cunningly trapped and killed by that devil of a Dulavoy: and her mother too, like a true *Sati,* breathed her last on hearing of her husband's death. You know the Pundit Rao had no other children and no relatives here in Tanjore; and his heart was broken and he had none but this girl to leave all his fortune to. He sent for me one day and told me that he wanted me to look after this child, as he was himself sick of it all and going into the forests."

"Why did he choose you of all men in the world: I wonder?"

"I can't say," replied the Havaldar. "Perhaps, he thought of our old school-days and how we chummed together then. He did speak of those days often and fondly too, and he seemed to remember many little things we then did. He

spoke of you and your absence from Tanjore: how we three, and Venkoba Rao and Krishnappa Naik who are now no more, used to play in the river-bed every evening: how Madhava Pundit, the present Dewan's father, and his swell comrades fought us one day, and what a sound licking we gave them. It quite upset me I tell you, and drew tears from these old eyes of mine to hear him talk so, almost childlike, of those days, in the midst of his great sorrow, just as if he were only one of us. Then he charged me by the memory of those days to look after this little one as if she were my own grand-daughter. I fell at his feet and prayed him to stay with us, but it was in vain. The Maharaja too tried his best to keep him, but it was useless".

"But how could a Brahmin girl live with you?"

"She doesn't live with me, nor in my house," replied Ragoji. "An old widow, some relation of the Pundit Rao's late wife, keeps house for her, and they live together in a small garden-house at Vallam: there is also a *Sudra* servant-girl; and I am the patriarch of this little family and spend my time mostly with them. I brought the child to-day in her bullock-coach just to see the *tamasha*".

"Are you paid for this?"

"O, I get five pagodas a month, and fifty *kalams* of paddy annually", said Ragoji with a merry twinkle of his left eye.

"Who manages his property then?"

"I think he has left it with the Maharaja," replied the Havaldar. "The Amatya sends all the rice needed by us and I hold an advance of ten pagodas for extras, which I recoup from time to time, as may be necessary. He pays me my salary, not as in the army."

"You are a lucky dog now, Ragoji," observed the Brahmin pleasantly.

"But I tell you honestly, I was quite content with my

Havaldarship," replied Ragoji with another twinkle, now meant to betoken seriousness. "To be frank with an old friend, I was angry with him for having, as I thought, given me up; for, mind you, he hardly seemed to know me when we met anywhere; and though his wife spoke of me to him more than once,—you know I was in her father's service before I joined the army and knew her as a girl, he would not speak to the Senapati[36] in my behalf. So I was rather sore at heart and meant to be quite stiff; but the way he treated me and talked of the old days, and his begging me to help him—why, I wept like an old woman and was ready to die for him if necessary, for the sake of the old days, as he said".

"And then, what happened?"

"He first took us all to Vallam and we lived there for a few days. The Maharaja tried his best, but couldn't make him stay. At last, he agreed to his going on a pilgrimage to Benares, and offered to send a suitable retinue with him. But early on the morning after the day on which we got news of the Senapati's success, he was missing, and no one knows whither he went, and whether he is alive or dead now. The Maharaja sent searching parties in all directions, but it was all a wild goose's chase. Two men were specially sent to Benares, and they too have returned without tracing him,—the devil knows whether they went so far at all. My own belief is that he must have died heart-broken in some unknown place, or perhaps he killed himself, who knows?"

"It is a sad story, very sad indeed!" observed Rama Sastrulu sorrowfully. "Fancy the great Pundit Rao, the greatest statesman and most learned man of his age, dying unknown in some obscure village, even like a rat in a hole, and cremated there out of the village funds, perhaps, or by some charitable person; or worst still, meeting a foul death by his own hands! Such a fickle harlot is Fortune, and so vain are all human hopes and ambitions! But not an atom

moves without Him and it is all His inscrutable will. Poor men like us are indeed happy, Ragoji, if such is the fate of greatness and power."

"You are indeed right there," replied the Havaldar, "and now that you have my story, you must tell me yours, and what all you saw in the north. But I am afraid it is already too late and I must return at once to Vallam with my young charge. Won't you come there some day and tell us all about it?"

"Certainly, I shall," replied the Brahmin, "and I assure you, the sooner for the sake of the old days. Goodbye for the present."

"As the retrieved felon said to the hangman on leaving the scaffold," said the Havaldar merrily; and lifting the younger girl on to his shoulders, he trotted off with the other close at his heels.

CHAPTER V

LEGEND AND HISTORY[37]

Right in the midst of the Nallamalai hills in the Kurnool district, in a region infested with fierce wild beasts and deadly snakes and noted for deadlier malaria, with no civilized human habitation for forty miles round, stands a magnificent temple, one of the largest and holiest in all India. If Maheswara, the great Lord of the Universe, intended to put His devotees to the utmost trouble and difficulty and thus test the sincerity of their faith, He could not have chosen a less accessible and more unwholesome spot for His tabernacle; nor could the richest and most powerful of His worshippers have reared a grander monument than that temple to testify to his matchless piety. The edifice, which is wholly of hard granite, is nearly a furlong square, and its massive walls are from 20 to 26 feet high. The outer surface

of these walls, more than fifty thousand square feet in area, is elaborately sculptured all over with rows of Parthian figures, legends from the national *puranas*, hunting and pastoral scenes, and vivid representations of mountain-life and scenery. The spacious enclosure and its environs are studded with smaller pagodas and *mantaps*, too numerous to be counted, and in the centre of them all stands the *sanctum sanctorum*, the shrine of Mallikarjuna, about thirty feet square, surmounted by a turret forty-four feet high. "The walls and roof of this holy of holies, the frames and panels of its three outer entrances in front and at the sides, the upper facings of its three porticos, as well as the huge masonary figures of bulls adorning these porticos on the top at each angle, are all covered over with copper plates completely gilded. So also are the surfaces and pedestals of the four flag-staffs on the four sides of the pagoda. On a rough calculation, the total area thus plated and gilded amounts to nearly five thousand square feet. Standing in the midst of that vast mountainous jungle with tired and trembling limbs, and looking on that stupendous movement of human piety, — the astounding mass of life-like sculpture and the brilliant temple rising like a pyramid of solid gold — a thousand conflicting thoughts come crowding into the mind and daze the brain with awe and wonder, fear and humility, regret and despair. Can all this be right and proper, O Thou Inscrutable Being, or is it all a bubble of vanity or misguided piety, a mere waste, a useless wearing away of countless thousands of human lives? Look at the havoc which the cruel hand of time has made on the noble work, the stately towers in undignified ruin and decay, a nursery of ugly bats and lizards; look at the grass and the shrubs now growing unheeded right up to the very foot of the golden tabernacle and threatening to choke the shrine and establish the pristine sway of nature, for a time usurped by presumptuous man; and hear how pompously the inscriptions on plate and stone

prattle of ancient kings and princes, their mighty prowess and eternal fame. Where are now the veteran guards and soldiers of the Emperor Krishna Deva Raya who, on his return from his northern conquests, covered the temple with gilded plates four centuries ago? Alas! his gilded plates now find their way to toddy shops, one after the other, through the barbarous *Chenchus*, and there is not a single soldier or sentry left of his numerous legions, to prevent it. Princes and priests, soldiers and saints, temples and turrets, the very gods themselves go the way of all the world, and man's vain aspirations and ambitions are as a momentary bubble on the vast ocean of eternity."*[38] Two miles lower down the temple runs the mighty river Krishna, through a densely wooded valley, scarcely broader here than one of the hundreds-of irrigation channels which distribute her waters to the rich paddy fields of the plains. So thick is the jungle here and so narrow the valley, that the rays of the sun scarcely penetrate this region even at midday. The dark waters of the river glide silently, and the awful stillness of this enchanted spot is rarely broken. The slopes of the hills which rise on either side of the valley abound in caves and crevices, but there is a stone-paved pathway leading from the temple to the river, with *mantaps* at frequent intervals for the feeble and the tired to rest in.

In front of a small grotto facing the river and on a rock barely a foot above its level was seen seated a human figure in deep meditation. Age and penance had worn down the frame very considerably; but the upper part of the body, poised on the crossed legs in the posture of *padmasana*,[38] was erect and stiff, so also the arms which were crossed on the lap; the eyes were closed and the head nearly bald and bare. A small orange-coloured loincloth was the only garment

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*From the author's essay on *Srisuilam and its Legends.*

worn, although the morning was chill and the atmosphere damp and moist. The figure might have been an exquisite model of wax, so still it was, even the respiratory movements being hardly noticeable. A rustic swain or damsel, happening to come there, would have mistaken it for some woodland deity, and paid worshipful homage. The sombre stillness of the place and the weird solemnity of the situation could not, however, have been more abruptly and rudely disturbed, than by what followed; something rushing through the bushes beyond the grotto and then two successive gun-shots which reverberated throughout the valley, echoed backwards and forwards by the surrounding hills, till the sound died away in the distance, giving place to the painful growls of a wounded, fleeing tigress. A rough-clad European came running eagerly with a gun in his hand whose muzzle was still smoking, but he almost fell back in surprise on seeing the seated figure whose deep-set eyes were just opening with a frown of annoyance and displeasure. The sportsman stood transfixed to the spot, planting his gun on the ground and leaning on it as if he needed support; he saw at a glance that he had just escaped committing manslaughter. The eyes of the figure had indeed opened, but not another muscle moved, nor was the stiff attitude relaxed, or changed in any manner. The eyes, which were remarkable to behold, stared upon the intruder for some seconds, and they were about to close again, when the European addressed the following words in Hindustani:

"Who may you be, Sir, and what are you doing here? I had almost killed you unwittingly just now, in having a shot at Stripes."

"It would not have mattered, much" replied the ascetic, for such he seemed to be by the colour of his cloth, in a calm and hollow voice.

"Wouldn't it?" rejoined the European in a tone of

astonishment. "Perhaps," he continued "you don't set much value on your life, or you would't be here, thus unarmed and alone to become a prey to Stripes any moment; but all the same, I should have had to carry the load of manslaughter on my mind for the rest of my life, though God knows I hardly expected you. But what brought you here and what do you do, thus sitting alone on this rock?"

"God and Nature are better company than man, especially to one like me " replied the ascetic slowly; "perhaps always and to every one," added he after a pause, as if speaking to himself.

"God is everywhere and so too is Nature, when we think of it," said the European in reply, as he went nearer and seated himself on a rock. "And as for man—well, I for one should prefer his company to that of tigers and cheetahs, bad as some men no doubt are. But you who seem so old and so feeble, how the devil did you get here at all?"

"God is everywhere no doubt," replied the ascetic, ignoring the last question, "but to the thoughtless and the wordly-minded, He is nowhere, and their own ambitions, desires and vanities are everything."[39]

"After all," rejoined the European, "Man is the noblest and greatest of God's creatures on earth, and, be his hopes and aims high or low and his activities noble or mean, we have to take him as he is and make the best of him, even because he is the best handiwork of God."[40]

"You have a wiser head on your young shoulder than most of your race," remarked the ascetic, and he looked upon the intruder with some curiosity for the first time.

"What do you know of my race and of our wisdom or folly?" retorted the European with a smile; and receiving no reply, he continued: "But how did you ever come to this remote and lonely region, the haunt of ferocious wild beasts, old, feeble and unarmed as you are? Or have you indeed

been living here for many years, preferring as you say the company of God and Nature to that of man?"

"Remote, solitary, and infested with wild beasts as you say this region now is," replied the ascetic, again evading the query, "it was once the seat of a great kingdom, and more than one human tragedy was enacted even here, as yonder golden temple will bear witness."

"I have seen and marvelled at the great temple for a whole day," replied the European, "but what kingdom do you speak of in this primeval forest and what tragedy do you refer to?"

"Know, young Feringhi," replied the ascetic, "that in the olden days, there was a great city on the plateau beyond this hill, ruled over by a king named Chandragupta. You might still see the traces of the moat and part of the fort-wall if you care to climb up there. He it was who first came to know of the presence of the holy spot and built the great temple, leaving his capital and encamping near the shrine for the purpose, for more than twelve years. When he returned to his palace after completing the edifice, he saw a beautiful maiden there and fell in love with her, not knowing that she was his own daughter whom he had left an infant in the queen's arms. Neither the queen, nor even the damsel herself, could however convince him of it, and he attributed their words to the queen's jealousy. You know, or perhaps you do not know yet, for you look very young and come from a colder country, how completely Love can blind the outer as well as the inner eye of man and make a very brute of him in its clutches. Infatuated with his passion and unaccustomed to self-control, the king attempted to enforce his incestuous lust, and poor, innocent Bhramaravati[41] drowned herself in despair, to save herself and her father from sin. She plunged into these waters, says tradition, from the very rock on which you now sit."

The European involuntarily shifted his seat to another rock, and he asked eagerly: "What became of the unfortunate king?"

"Her death opened his eyes to the truth," replied the ascetic, "and he too sought a watery grave from the same rock."

"How awful to think of it, how pitiful!" exclaimed the European, visibly moved: "but," continued he in a different tone after a few moments, "this may be a mere legend, one of the thousands of tales this wonderful land abounds in everywhere."

"Yonder ruins and that temple can alone bear witness to it, till the king and the princess come to life again from the dark bosom of Krishnaveni, as the olden bock says they will one day do," said the ascetic, as if to himself. "But who are you," he asked, turning to the European, "who have come so far in search of game and who speak Hindustani so well, though you could not have been long in this country?"

"You are right there," replied the foreigner, "and it is barely two years since I came to this country. I came on the Company's business to the Nawab at Kurnool, and hearing of this famous temple and the big game to be had in plenty in these parts, came out with my gun for a week's holiday. Who may you be, Sir, and what do you do here?"

"I am an ascetic as you see," replied the old man "and my vows prohibit my thinking, or speaking of my past life. I believe you are an Englishman, and not of the French or the Dutch nationality."

The European was surprised at this remark, and he said, "It is true I am an Englishman and my name is Lyttelton,[42] but how did you guess that?"

"I once knew the Feringhis and their ways well:" replied the ascetic. "That, is a fine gun you have", continued he,

looking at the weapon closely, "and I will venture another guess, that it is the same, or very like the one that was given by one of your generals to the Nizam Nazir Jung."[43]

Mr. Lyttelton was simply astounded when he heard that remark, and his curiosity to know more about the remarkable old man increased.

"You are right again," said he, "and it was the Nizam himself who gave it to me as a memento of some slight service I did him when we went together for the relief of Tanjore. But you must tell me how you know all this."

"To relieve Tanjore, did you say?" exclaimed the ascetic, in evident excitement and surprise. "Who besieged Tanjore, and how came it about, and how ended? Pray, tell me all about it, and I shall then tell you how I know of the gun."

The eagerness and excitement of the old man on hearing of the siege of Tanjore further aroused Mr. Lyttelton's curiosity, and he informed the ascetic how Chanda Saheb had besieged that city after the battle of Ambur[44] to revenge himself on Pratap Singh for calling in the Marathas.

"But Chanda Saheb is rotting in a Maratha prison!" exclaimed the ascetic interrupting. "What story is this that you are telling me?"

"I am telling no story, Sir," replied Lyttelton, "and it is clear from what you say that you have shut yourself up in these jungles for sometime. Chanda Saheb was released from prison by the Maratha King on Dupleix's intervention, and he then invaded the Carnatic with Muzaffur Jung and killed Nawab Anwarudin at the battle of Ambur. He was then appointed by his patron as Nawab of Arcot and his first act was to lay siege to Tanjore."

"And how did it end?"

"Tanjore would have surely fallen a prey to Chanda Saheb," continued Lyttelton, "had not the Nizam hastened

to relieve it. The English sent a detachment of troops to help him and I was on the staff of the English commander. But Chanda Saheb is a clever rogue, and before we could reach the Tanjore country and scare him away, he managed to get out of the weak and simple Pratap Singh a bond for forty-six lakhs of rupees."

"Forty-six lakhs of rupees!" exclaimed the ascetic : "Poor Pratap, poor Pratap!" he murmured to himself in a softer tone; and the news seemed to put him in a brown study.

Mr. Lyttelton was eager to know something more of the mysterious ascetic, and so said after a while: "And now, Sir, your promise: I have told you all about it, and you have to tell me about yourself and how you know of this gun."

"You have not told me all about it yet," replied the ascetic, at the same time fixing his keen eyes on the Englishman's face, which seemed to embarass him somehow. "Surely, the contest could not have rested there, and neither the Nizam nor your own people would have allowed Chanda Saheb to continue as the Nawab of Arcot?"

"Well, as for that matter, it is not settled yet and we have to fight it out;" replied Lyttelton. "The French are, of course backing up Chanda Saheb and they are more jealous of us than ever after we got Devicota."[45]

"But how did you get Devicota which belongs to the Tanjore Kingdom? Surely the English did not make war on their friend and ally Pratap Singh and wrest it from him?"

"Political friendships are not unlike friendships made in wine, are they?" replied Lyttelton with a smile. "Pratap Singh has at best been only a lukewarm friend to us and likes to sit on the fence, as we say, as between ourselves and the French. So when the late Rajah Saiyaji sought our help to put him back on the throne, the Company thought it a good opportunity to replace a doubtful and unsure ally by a firm and grateful friend, and an expedition was sent to aid him,

which eventually took Devicota under Major Lawrence. But Pratap Singh made up his mind in our favour by that time and sued for peace, ceding that fortress to us as the price."

"Poor Pratap, poor Pratap!" murmured the ascetic again, in a tone of regret and compassion.

"Have I told you all about it now?" asked the Englishman, rather pointedly.

"Pray do not take offence at my inquisitiveness, or at my questioning you so unceremoniously;" replied the ascetic in a conciliatory tone. "The rules of my order prohibit my speaking of my past life; but I am bound to tell you something in common courtesy: I was in the Tanjore court and in what one would call a high position. It was then that I saw your gun, with an officer of the Nizam who was well known to me; that golden crescent on the butt, which I was told the Nizam put in after the weapon was presented to him, enabled me to recognise it. You will perhaps wonder less now at my asking you, a stranger, so many questions, and my anxiety about the fate of Tanjore."

"Perhaps, you are the great Brahmin minister I heard of, who used to hate all Feringhis alike and had the Maharajah under his thumb? It was said that he disappeared mysteriously four or five years ago, soon after some grave domestic calamity!" exclaimed Lyttelton, almost involuntarily, as he gazed with a feeling of wonder and admiration at the old man before him.

"Perhaps," was the faint and scarcely audible reply.

CHAPTER VI

WOULD HE WERE HERE

Pratap Singh had gained experience, but he was hampered by a number of perplexing difficulties: there was a pretender

to the throne[46] who had actually occupied it temporarily on two former occasions and whom the English had supported recently; there were two rival Nawabs[47] between whom he was only a bone of contention, whose certain fate was to be gnawed and broken to pieces by the winner in the contest; the Great and the Little Maravas were constantly on the watch to steal a march on him and seize his possessions; and there were the French and the English, never at peace with each other, and always scheming to entangle him in their quarrels. Beset with so many troubles and dangers, the King, who had been trained more like a creeper needing constant support than a stalwart young giant of the forest, felt his seat on the *musnud* rather unsteady; and he began to rely on the goodwill and support of his subjects whose welfare was after all most identical with his own, and sought to please them by lightening the heavy load of taxation. In the short scramble for power that followed the sudden disappearance of the Pundit Rao, the wily and ambitious Senapati, Mankoji, easily succeeded in winning the royal favour, aided thereto by his successful repulsion of the Great Maravas and redemption of the disaster brought about by what he termed the selfish and fool-hardy policy of that minister. Though he could never hope to wield the same extraordinary influence over the King, he did not scruple to damage the fair name of the late favourite as far as possible, with faint and double-edged praise, mean insinuation or bolder accusation; and most of the other ministers gladly joined him in the unmanly game. But in his bid for power, Mankoji had two formidable and generally united rivals in the brothers Ramanna Pundit and Venkanna Pundit, whose respective offices of finance-minister and private-secretary, brought them in constant contact with the King, and gave them an advantage over the Senapati, who had often to be away with the army. The Dewan was reputedly the ablest astrologer of the age, and had recently risen high in the

King's estimation and favour by more than one successful prediction. The Amatya, on the other hand, was a crafty and silent man, more ambitious and unscrupulous than the Senapati; and even the late Pundit Rao had recognised in him a rising opponent of no mean calibre. The King, however, had none of that awe, regard, and affection for these men that he had felt towards his venerable preceptor, and he shrewdly pitted them against one another and frequently managed, with growing experience and confidence, to act for himself. It was at the Nayak durbar-hall of the palace that the King and his counsellors were discussing how they should act in the historic struggle for the Nawabship of Arcot. They were seated on a fine slab of gneiss, eighteen feet by sixteen, and over two feet thick, the King on a low ottoman and the rest on a carpet spread in front of it.

"The French are nearer to us than the English," observed the Prime-minister, "and can harm or help more. And Dupleix, the English have none to match him as a statesman, or as a general."

"I am not so sure of his generalship," remarked the Senapati. "Major Lawrence is no spinster; and I particularly noticed at Devicota a young dare-devil of an Englishman, I think they call him Clive, who will soon eclipse Lawrence and all the rest of the brood and prove a match for half-a-dozen Dupleixs, if indeed he is not killed off soon by his very rashness. I have somehow more faith in the English; they are more steady."

"And you say this after a reference to Devicota too?" exclaimed the King warmly. "Have we not lost it by their faithlessness, and have they not, after repeated assurances of friendship, sought to oust me from the throne and reinstate that infamous pretender from the jungle?"

"They say it was due more to their credulity than anything else; that they were deceived by the false

representations of Saiyaji;" replied Mankoji apologetically.

"Then why not give us back Devicota?" demanded the Amatya from behind his royal master, and the Senapati was embarassed for a reply.

"Of course, they first took it from us on behalf of Saiyaji," replied he after a pause, "and they now keep it as the price for not aiding that pretender any more. They expect to make a splendid harbour of it for their ships by removing the bar at the mouth of the Coleroon, and they are naturally anxious, being islanders and relying mainly on their navy, to have such a haven as near their French rivals as possible."

"What worries us most is that wretched bond which Chanda Saheb has cunningly taken from us;" observed the King regretfully. "Had we only put him off for a few days longer,—I sometimes feel inclined to cut off the hand that signed it, and certainly it was a far worse crime than that of the Pandyan king who hastily knocked at the door of a Brahmin's house at night with a good intent, and then chopped off his hand for his thoughtless act. None of you was able to save me from it,'" added he bitterly.

"It is after all a scrap of paper," remarked the Dewan.

"Such extorted bonds are not valid," observed the Senapati, "and it will be time enough to worry when the money has to be paid."

"But should Chanda Saheb become the Nawab, he would demand immediate payment," observed the King gloomily."

"That is exactly the point I am urging," put in the Prime-minister. "If we join the French now, they would intercede with him to get the bond cancelled."

"That is my point too," replied Mankoji. "If we join the English and support the rightful Nawab, Muhamud Ali, such a contingency will never arise, and Chanda Saheb will never be able to enforce the bond."

"The rightful Nawab is the one who succeeds eventually," observed the Amatya, with a squint of his crafty eyes.

"That depends on the unknown result of the war," remarked the Prime-minister. "But if we join the French and help Chanda Saheb now, we might reasonably ask for a cancellation, or at least reduction of the bond-amount at the very outset, and the English too cannot accuse us of unfaithfulness after their recent conduct at Devicota."

"What does our astrologer-Dewan say?" said the King, turning to Ramanna Pundit suddenly. "Who will become the Nawab of Arcot?"

"Give me a number below one hundred,"

"Fifty-one," answered the King promptly.

The Dewan muttered some calculations, while the rest watched him curiously. He then announced: "The Nawab of Arcot will meet with a foul death before the year is out."

This unexpected declaration surprised the audience, but the King remarked after a pause: "But this does not help us; there are two men each claiming to be the Nawab of the Carnatic; which is the one to die?"

"I cannot say that unless I have their horoscopes," replied the Dewan, and everyone laughed at it.

"Would that we had the late Pundit Rao here now!" exclaimed the King. "Chanda Saheb would never have got that bond from us had he been here then."

"He would have advised a strict neutrality, I think," said the Prime-minister. "He hated all the Feringhis alike."

"I am sure that he preferred the English to the French, who are intolerant of our religion," observed Mankoji. "That was the only point on which we ever agreed," added he with a smile.

"We must manage to remain for some time longer and let them fight it out a bit among themselves," said the King rising, and the ministers too at once rose from their seats and descended from the dais. "Let us be understood, in the meanwhile, to be getting ready, and the Pradhan will see to it that either party believes that we are for it."

CHAPTER VII

THE LITTLE GARDENER

"Was ever any child so naughty?" exclaimed the *Sudra* maid-servant Sarada, pouting and ludicrously looking vexed. "I have just watered the *tulsi* bed and she is already making holes in the ridges and drawing off the water."

"I am not draining the bed, Sarada," replied the delinquent, a beautiful little girl of five years,[48] without leaving off her objectionable activity, or even looking up, "I am only taking some of the water to my rose plants."

"But I watered your rose plants only this morning, you little cherub," retorted Sarada. "I am sure you will drown them."

"No, no;" replied the child calmly; "you did not water them enough this morning; see, they droop so."

"You are a better gardener than myself, are you not?" demanded the servant. "Or perhaps you know more of rose-culture than even my father. I shall tell your aunt and keep you out of the garden in future, at least when I water the plants. It will make aunt wild, I am sure, to see her *tulsi* bed so dug about."

"You may fetch aunt now," replied the child quietly. "Go, go and bring her and let her see whether I have harmed her *tulsi* bed."

"You are a wilful child and you fear nobody;" said

Sarada, with a look of fondness and admiration, and she placed her empty pitcher on the ground and suddenly took up the child in her arms and smothered her with kisses. The little girl kicked lustily and jumped to the ground, freeing herself from the servant's embrace.

Sarada looked at her own clothes and said reproachfully; "You have soiled my new cloth all over, Bayee, with your muddy hands and feet. This is what I get for kissing you."

"Why did you interrupt my work and kiss me now?" retorted the child with a mischievous laugh, as she resumed her hydraulic activities.

"It is a pity the old master is not here now to see the little-cherub, so like her mother when she was her age;" said Sarada aloud, talking to herself. "It would so gladden his poor old heart. Dear old master! It is not even known whether he is alive or dead."

"Dead to us he has been these five years and more, though God knows he may still be alive;" said an old lady who entered the garden just then and overheard the servant's words. "But what made you think of him just now, Sarada?"

"Bayee is playing in the garden," replied Sarada, "and see, madam, how much like her unfortunate mother she looks. Wouldn't it gladen the old master's heart to see her now? Come, child, here is your aunt come to see you."

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed the old lady on seeing the child. "She has been paddling in the wet mud. You will have to clean her, Sarada, and change her dress too."

"That I shall do as soon as I have watered the plants," replied the servant. "Come away from that mire and slush, child," continued she, "or I shall have to bathe you again and you will catch cold."

"I like to bathe and I won't catch cold;" replied the child gleefully. "Aunty, see, I have dug a channel from your *tulsi*

bed to my rose plants; isn't it nice?"

"O, it is wonderful and you are a greater engineer than the king who made the Grand Anicut," replied the old lady, fondly stroking the child's curly head. "But you must not dirty your clothes in this manner. If you tell Sarada, she will do what you want for you."

"I like to water my plants myself. They will give me more flowers if I do so," replied the child firmly. "I don't want Sarada to do it for me."

"So young and yet so wilful already!" said the old lady musingly. "Just the same family trait; 'I like this and I do not like that,' and the world should note and act accordingly. Will lettuce sprout up if you sow beans?"

Even as she was speaking, the old lady saw two men peering into the garden from outside the low mud-wall that surrounded it. One of them she recognised at once as Havaldar Ragoji, the major-domo of the family; but his companion, a tall old ascetic, to judge by his orange coloured garb, she knew not: yet there was something familiar about him.

"Is that you, Ragoji?" said she, addressing the Havaldar, "and why have you come so early for your night-watch?"

"I have brought you a visitor" replied the Havaldar, in a tone of unusual exultation, his left eye winking merrily, "a venerable Sanyasi has just come to our town and he has come to see you and our little Bayee there."

"So I see;" replied the old lady testily. "But why don't you bring the holy man through the front door and let him bless this humble dwelling? Bring him in through the gate; it is open."

While this conversation was proceeding, the old Sanyasi was looking fondly and intently at the little girl who was again tending her rose-plants, sheltering his eyes with his

left hand from the rays of the setting sun. There was a pleasant and childlike smile on his face, and he was so absorbed in watching the little gardener that he did not hear the conversation, or even notice the old lady. The maid-servant Sarada also looked up at the tall stranger, with increasing wonder for a while, and then, with the advantage of a much keener vision than the old lady's, she suddenly exclaimed, at the same time dropping down the pitcher of water she was carrying : "Why, it is our old master!"

"Ay, so it is," said Ragoji simply.

CHAPTER VIII

MAHOMET AND THE MOUNTAIN

The Havaldar's own house was close to the villa in Manambuchavadi[49] referred to in the last chapter, and he used to spend some time there every evening with his grand-children ever since their leaving Vallam[50] and settling down in Tanjore just before its investment by Chanda Saheb. Fancy his surprise then that evening, when in the midst of a most spirited game of blind-man's buff, as his favorite grand-child Kaveri was tying a cloth over his eyes and he was crying out that it was too tight, at the same time trying to loosen it and peep underneath, he was suddenly called 'Raghava' by some one standing at the threshold, and in a tone which seemed familiar. To most of his friends and acquaintances, he was only 'Ragoji' or 'Havaldarji,' and there were but few people in the world now who called him by that name of his boyhood. Hastily pulling off the cloth from his eyes and rubbing them to restore their normal vision, he saw an old Sanyasi standing at the threshold, beckoning him out of the house. Ragoji obeyed mechanically, and soon learnt the whole truth. The late Pandit Rao, whom we shall hereafter call the Sanyasi, had first gone to Vallam, and not finding the family

there, he had come direct to the Havaldar's house in Tanjore. Ragoji had not much time to wonder, for the questions came sharp one after another, and he had to narrate in a few minutes all the important events connected with the family during five years. Then the Sanyasi asked to be taken at once to the villa, and before doing so, Ragoji ran into his house to take his turban. He then directed his son Raghunath, who was having his meal before going out for orderly duty at the palace for the night, to inform the king through his Amatya that the Pundit Rao had returned and was now a Sanyasi. The two old men then walked towards the villa and we know what happened there.

Sometime after entering the house and being joyfully welcomed by its inmates, the Sanyasi told the Havaldar not to reveal his return to any one without his permission; and then the Havaldar fell at his feet and reported what he had already done in his ignorance and joy at his revered master's return. It was too late for mending, and an hour later, the Amatya came to the villa with his royal master's salutations to his beloved *guru*, who had become even more venerable now by virtue of the orange robe, and a respectful invitation to go over to the palace. The Amatya then gave his own account of all the recent political events in reply to the Sanyasi's questions, and said finally that the Maharaja was anxious to have his *guru's* advice at that critical moment. The Sanyasi was evidently pleased with these marks of royal favour and sent his blessings and assurances of regard and solicitude to the King through his secretary; but he firmly declined to visit the palace or mix in politics again, and the gorgeous ivory palanquin specially sent for him returned empty.

It was near midnight, and the inmates of the villa were in bed. The Sanyasi was reclining on an easy chair in the moonlight in the garden, and chatting freely with the Havaldar, who was seated on the bare ground near by. He

seemed to have changed considerably, and was almost garrulous with his old school-fellow. There was a knock at the outer gate, and the Havaldar went to see who called at such an hour. On unbarring the door, he saw his son Raghunath, who told him that the Maharaja himself was coming behind to pay his respects to his *guru*, and that he was sent in advance to apprise him of it; Raghunath added that the news of the late Pundit Rao's return had already spread widely throughout the city. This proved the climax of the day's wonders, and Ragoji was not sure whether he was standing on his head or on his heels. But the distant hum of the royal palkibearers fell on his ears, and he ran back to inform his master. He was no less surprised at the Sanyasi's calmness on hearing such news; in fact, it looked as if he had expected the royal visit. At the Sanyasi's bidding, he brought another chair from the house and placed it near his, and then he was directed to return to the gate and conduct the King into the garden on his arrival. On nearing the villa, the bearers ceased their sing-song by the King's command, and a few minutes later, Maharaja Pratap Singh, the King of Tanjore, entered the humble garden. The Havaldar showed the way: then came an attendant holding a silver torch fed with perfumed oil and the Amatya carrying some fruits, sweets, flowers and other presents on a golden plate; and then Pratap Singh himself, followed by Raghunath, the Havaldar's son. The rest of the retinue remained in the street. As the King approached the spot where the Sanyasi was seated in his easy chair, his Amatya placed the golden plate of offering before the holy man, and Pratap Singh prostrated himself on the bare ground, saying, "I, Pratap Singh, son of Tukoji, and your humble pupil, salute your venerable lotus feet." The Sanyasi prayed for long life and victory to the King, and pointing to the chair near him, asked him to be seated. The King complied, and gazed long and affectionately on the old man before him. The Sanyasi was

the first to break the silence; he made kind inquiries about the health of the King and the royal family and expressed his gladness on hearing of the birth of a much-longed-for daughter to the queen. On a signal from the Amatya, the attendants retired to a distance, and the three men were left alone.

"It is all your blessing," said the King.

"Say, rather, the blessing of Mahadev, Pratap." replied the Sanyasi. "What can man, poor man do? It is all His will, His play. Your Amatya has informed me of recent events and the great trouble you had two years ago. In fact, I heard of it all from an Englishman in my seclusion at Srisailam, and that is partly the reason for my return."

"I am very glad to learn that;" said the King eagerly. "When I heard of my *guru's* return this evening, I felt sure that the great Brahathiswara[51] had listened to my earnest prayer and sent me help when I am in such perplexity."

"What can poor man do?" replied the Sanyasi. "The Englishman told me everything. I was sorry for you then, Pratap, though I had renounced the world; and I was also anxious for the safety of the little one sleeping under yonder roof now. It was not right, but you know, Pratap, how I loved them, both Muktamba and Murari, and that is all I have now on this earth to remind me of them; I always loved you too as a son; and I had been cherishing such high hopes and ambitions for this kingdom. I did not yield at once to it, and I tried to argue down that feeling; but I could not. I felt restless and could remain there no longer; and so I came out of the hills; and almost without knowing whither my feet were leading me I have come here; but it is wrong".

"It is not wrong," said the King passionately, "it is only right and proper. Did not the great Vidyaranya[52] found a glorious empire?"

"But this is personal, this is pride, this is vanity and

delusion, this is mere selfishness and self-deception, and I must live it down; though, sometimes, I feel it is a great sacrifice I am making;" replied the Sanyasi calmly. "And would you believe it," continued he in a more eager tone, "the little thing has already captivated my heart with her simple words and childish pranks, reminding me so often of her unfortunate mother; and she would not sleep unless I put her to bed and told her stories! And she has his eyes and smile too, did you notice it? The very eyes and smile of Murari, and she is so precocious. And your coming here at this hour, Pratap, to see me, an old, broken down, unhappy man,—well, I know you always had some regard for me."

"I have come now through sheer selfishness," replied the King, "it is I who am selfish and not you. You have renounced the world and have nothing to hope or wish for now. To the ascetic, the monarch is a mere straw. But it will be true charity, and no selfishness on your part, to pilot the ship of State now, and, steer it safe through the present storm and confusion, by your experience and wisdom."

"I will not refuse my advice, if you value it, as long as I stay here, Pratap," replied the Sanyasi, "but taking a more active part is impossible hereafter. From what Venkanna told me, you are now preplexed whether to join the French and Chanda Saheb, or the English and Muhamud Ali, and a bond for a very large amount worries you. You know, I don't love the Feringhis as a race; and, if it is possible, I should advice you to keep clear of all of them. But I learn this is not feasible now, and the second best course would be to be consistent and act on some principle in your dealings with them, rather than play the weather-cock. Chanda Saheb has always been hostile; and neither he, nor Dupleix can be trusted; they are both ambitious and unscrupulous. Muhamud Ali, as the son of his father, is the rightful Nawab of Arcot, and though the English have behaved badly of late, they are I think more reliable than the French, and I hear they have better generals.

We have all along been more friendly with them than with the bigoted French, who are intolerant of our religion. My advice therefore is, since you cannot remain neutral, side with the rightful Nawab and the English; but, mark this well. Pratap, never stretch your hand farther into the fire than you can withdraw, and do not cripple your resources at home to send a large army for helping *mlechhas* in their quarrels. This is my advice, but I am old and I have been away for some years now." This unusual tone of modesty and diffidence, surprised the acute Amatya, but he kept his counsel.

"I thank you most sincerely," replied the King, "and I hope you will never refuse me your advice and blessing."

"What can man do, Pratap, what can weak and erring man do? The great Mahadev alone is all-wise and all-powerful. Pray to Him for help and guidance, and may He shower His choicest blessings on you and this Kingdom!"

"Of course, I shall, and I do so daily," replied the King, "but my *guru* is my visible god on earth, and I shall always seek his holy feet whenever I am in trouble or difficulty."

"Well said, my son, and may such occasions be few and rare! Humility towards God, reverence to elders, an ever-anxious solicitude for the welfare of his subjects, firm faith in righteousness, ardour for justice not untempered by mercy and a due regard to human frailty, foresight and caution in dealing with other kingdoms and States, confidence in himself combined with readiness and ability to utilise the brains of other men, these are the proper attributes of a wise monarch, and I know you have many of these qualities. What is now lacking or deficient, time and experience will no doubt bring to you. I learnt on my way here that you are lenient in the collection of revenue and that you have lightened taxation. Some bless and some laugh at you. for it; but that is ever the fate of greatness and power. I hope, however, you are maintaining the minimum balance I had

fixed for the central treasury."

"The treasury is nearly empty," remarked the Amatya.

"When the English backed up Saiyaji and invaded the-kingdom," said the King, "I thought it necessary to enlist the sympathy and goodwill of the people[53] and lightened some of the taxes. I have never since been able, what with one drain and another, to keep up the treasury-balance. I have also to confess to my shame that I have not yet founded the charities you charged me with, and that I have been obliged to borrow for myself all the income from Uppur[54] during these years."

There was an awkward pause, and the Sanyasi's countenance became clouded; but it was only for a few moments, and he regained his serenity immediately.

"You have gone through much trouble and anxiety, Pratap, and have scarcely had any time to attend to it;" observed he calmly, "that is no doubt the reason. I purchased that village only with the money I earned in serving this kingdom; and if its income was useful to you, I do not object to it. You may continue to enjoy it as long as I am alive, and until you are able to invest it in charity."

"I am not such a wretch and I shall return every pie of it as soon as I can; my Amatya keeps an accurate account of the transactions. I was so hard-pressed, and Mankoji and the Amatya suggested it at a critical moment, when I was like a man drowning, ready to catch at anything to save himself; but I felt so ashamed even then."

"Never mind, and don't think of it that way," rejoined the Sanyasi, "I would gladly have given it to you myself, had I been here then. But apart from this, Pratap, I warn you, do not take your morals from Mankoji, able general though he is, or from others; he is an unscrupulous man and too ambitious. Nor should you ignore your better conscience in such matters, for as the poet says:

".....In conflicting doubts,
The unbidden promptings of the good man's soul
Are an unerring measure of the truth."

CHAPTER IX

THE CHAMPION OF HER SEX

"WHY should the female sex be so maligned, as if men are all patrons of virtue and innocence and why should the female *koil,* and not the females of these simple birds which foolishly hatch and bring up her offspring, be taken as typical of the sex? It is so unjust, so like a man to say it;" said the girl vehemently. She was reading *Sakuntala,* and the verses which aroused her feminine anger have been thus translated into English:

"E'en in untutored brutes, the female sex
Is marked by inborn subtlety—much more
In beings gifted with intelligence.
The wily *Koil,* ere towards the sky
She wings her sportive flight, commits her eggs
To other nests and artfully consigns
The rearing of her little ones to strangers."[55]

She was singularly beautiful, and her pretty pouting enhanced the nameless charm of her face beaming with intelligence. Barely twelve[56] yet, she was tall for her age; slim; with fine features and black curly hair: large, dark, lustrous eyes and well-arched, thick, inky eyebrows; and her general appearance was as bright and fresh as sunshine after showers in April. Her beauty was of the intellectual type : not the soft, exuberant sensuousness, and languor of a voluptuous nature, nor the delicately chiselled refinement and sombre thoughtful serenity of the spiritual, but the alert and restless

intelligence of an eager and inquiring mind was the dominant expression of her eyes and cheerful countenance. She wore a lace-bordered soft blue silk which seemed to cling to her form lovingly in graceful folds and set off her fair complexion; and the way she wore it showed that she was still unwedded.

The person thus addressed was either too abstracted, or too much amused to answer at once, and so she repeated her question, "Why does the poet slander the female sex in this manner, Babaji?".

"To say that women are subtle does not necessarily mean, that men are simple," replied the Sanyasi, for the addressee was no other.

"But the poet deliberately libels the whole female sex in creation and implies that the male sex is saintly in comparison," retorted the girl.

"This is a drama, Bayee", observed the Sanyasi changing ground, and with a smile of pleasure lighting up his old face, "and you should not saddle the poet with all the sentiments he puts into the mouths of his various characters"

"But this is not merely casual", said the girl.

"Then you only prove the truth of his dictum", rejoined the Sanyasi with a gentle laugh, "you are so young and yet so acute. I half suspect that you are angry, only because the cap fits the head so nicely".

"O Babaji, this is not fair, and you know it;" exclaimed the girl. "I wish you would tell me why we are so slandered. This is not the first instance, nor Kalidasa the first poet, even within my little knowledge. Bhartrhari[57] is full of it; they never miss a chance to have a fling at us".

"I suppose it is because men have found it so in their experience," replied the Sanyasi more seriously, but still chuckling within himself. "Woman has always proved herself too subtle for man. How many an illiterate and stupid

woman leads her learned but simple lord by the nose all through life, even as a gipsy-woman leads and exhibits a monkey, or a bear for show. And not only that, woman has always been the evil genius of man. The Jews say that the first woman tempted the first man to transgress and sin against God, and thus 'brought death into the world and all our woe'."[58]

"What a silly idea!" exclaimed the girl, impatiently, "and such a poor compliment to the Almighty's foresight and power. I wonder any intelligent being can believe in such a story."

"I am told that millions of civilised human beings believe in it to this day," replied the Sanyasi.

"That only shows we are all slaves of custom and tradition, as you used to say," observed the girl thoughtfully. "But you have yet to prove to me how woman has been man's evil genius."

"Was not Sita the source of all the troubles of Rama during his exile and even after his return and coronation? Was not Draupadi the immediate cause of the great war and the slaughter of thousands of innocent men?"

"You are not very happy to-day in your examples, Babaji;" retorted the girl boldly. "I hope that, happily, not many men in this world will behave towards their wives as unjustly and shamefully as Rama did towards the saintly Sita, whose only fault was that she loved him too well. No one will deny that Sita was far less subtle and cunning than Rama; in fact, she was like a child to the very bitter end, and suffered all her life for it. And as for Draupadi, she always showed a keener sense of honour than her husbands, famous warriors though they were, and she had to goad them on in the noble path of duty and glory. I would rather be cunning like Draupadi than simple like the Pandavas."

"You are subtle beyond your years, Bayee", replied the

old man, gazing fondly on the girl whom his instruction had so ably and skilfully trained in a few years. My only anxiety hereafter, is to find you a proper husband. Happy would be the man who could appreciate and win the affection of such a girl. But I warn you, Bayee, such disputations and novel opinions are all very well with your old Babaji, and I have perhaps encouraged them too much, led thereto by unconscious vanity and the very pleasure of hearing you speak and watching the unfolding of your rare intellect. But no husband and no parents-in-law will allow all this even for a moment, and it is time that you learnt to curb your tongue and be discreet."

"Should I be mute if I am wedded?" asked the girl with a roguish smile.

"A daughter-in-law is not expected to have any opinions about anything whatsoever, much less declare them openly and argue about them with her elders," continued the Sanyasi. "Here, in this retired garden-house, with no one but myself and your old half-blind, doting aunt, you have grown up free and fresh like an antelope of the woods, and you have rarely seen other girls or the ways and manners of the world, how others like you are brought up and behave in Brahmin families like ours. I had almost forgotten you could not always remain thus and here. Not many young Sanskrit scholars of twice your age have read as much, or can boast of a keener or a better trained intelligence; but any other girl of even half your age will know more of family conventions and etiquette and the ways of the world generally."

"Why can we not always remain together here at Vallam, in this garden-house?" demanded the girl eagerly. "Why should there be any change in our present happy life?"

"How I wish it were possible!" said the Sanyasi with a sigh. "But it is not, and it would be unjust, even if it were possible. And now that I think of it, I must make haste and

find you a proper husband soon."

"But why?" reitrated the girl, "I am sure I don't want to marry, or in any way change my present happy life with you and dear old aunt."

"Our *Shastras* do not allow personal freedom to a woman at any period of her life, and I think, on the whole wisely too," replied the Sanyasi musingly. "She is first under the protection of her father, then of her husband, and lastly of her son, but never can she be mistress of herself. *'Na bhajet stri swatantratam'* as Manu says."[59]

"You are my grand-father, and why cannot I remain with you? I am quite happy as we are now."

"There speaks the child," replied the Sanyasi. "Am I immortal, Bayee, even if you could remain with me as long as I live? I am old and feeble, and my life now hangs by a slender thread. Who will look after you when I pass away, a beautiful, unwedded damsel in a world of sin and temptation? Life was far otherwise in days of yore when women too sometimes refused the sacrament of marriage, put on the holy thread and remained single, devoting themselves to study and meditation; but such a course is impossible in these troublous times, when every woman needs a strong protector. I am not an immortal and may die even before yonder moon sets presently."

"So may I, Babaji, and any one else. I too may die any moment and even before you. Does not the poet truly say, 'there is a season for harvesting the paddy and the wheat and the maize, but the sharp sickle of inexorable Death knows no fixed time for harvesting human lives'."

"Don't be foolish, Bayee, and don't talk so wildly; at any rate don't talk of dying before me," said the Sanyasi excitedly. "Good God! How that very thought makes me shudder and tremble! Go in, my child, it is very late and you should have gone to bed already. Dream of a nice, young

husband and let me know to-morrow morning; it will save me much trouble."

"If wed I must," continued the damsel, gathering together and tying up the palm-leaf copy of *Sakuntala* she had been reading, "why can I not wed after some years? Sakuntala did not wed Dushyanta when she was a little girl like me, nor Draupadi, nor Damayanti, nor Rukmini, nor Usha, nor Malati, nor Subhadra, nor Savitri, nor indeed any of the women we read of in the olden books."[60]

"Such a marriage as Sakuntala made for herself is indeed to be condemned," replied the Sanyasi, "and you know Kalidasa means to condemn such secret unions."

"But he is also against hasty marriages," rejoined the girl, for he says that

'Many a time
In hearts that know not each the other's fancies,
Fond love is changed into most bitter hate,'[61]

meaning thereby that the parties should know and love each other well before wedlock."

"But times have changed since, Bayee, and customs and manners with them;" replied the Sanyasi. "It is always the law of the great and all-wise Mahadev, the subject of whose playful sport we mortals are. Customs and manners change from time to time, as even good customs get corrupted after some generations and need to be suited to other conditions of life. For one reason and another, early marriages became necessary and the rule, though for the reason pointed out by Kalidasa, some of them do end in life-long misery. Late marriages, or even an unwedded state for women, are not prohibited by the *Shastras*, but later law-givers found it necessary to commend early marriages of girls among Brahmins, to safe-guard female chastity and purity of caste.

Your mother was only seven years when she was wedded to your father, who was then even younger than you are now. As for conjugal unhappiness owing to disparity of temperaments and tastes, you know what an ideal is held out to a Hindu wife—she is advised to befriend even her rivals in her husband's affections."

"It is a most unjust and selfish ideal," replied the girl vehemently, "and I should be ashamed of it, if I were a man. But tell me Babaji," continued she in a softer, coaxing tone, "were they happy, my father and my mother who were married so early? You know you have so long promised to tell me all about them some day. Aunt has told me something, but I wish to hear from you,—she so mixes up everything and she always cries when she speaks about them."

"Bayee, come in. It is very late and it is not good for you to stay out in the garden so long in the chill night air. Your Babaji ought to know better than to keep you out till near midnight," cried the shrill voice of 'the confusing and crying' old lady, from the threshold of the garden-gate.

"Did I not warn you already?" said the Sanyasi. "Go in, at once, and I shall tell you another time. You have brought down a torrent on yourself, and the spray is wetting me too. Go in, Bayee, there is a good girl, and don't forget to dream of a good husband and tell me in the morning."

CHAPTER X

LALLY RUNS AMOK

The day was the 5th of July 1758 A.D. and the hour past 10 P.M. They were assembled in the thatched shed in the garden attached to the Sanyasi's villa at Vallam, to which he had removed himself from Tanjore soon after his return, disliking the bustle and noise of the capital. The Sanyasi was seated on a deer-skin, leaning on a corner-pillar. The King

sat on a low cushioned seat, by his side, his Amatya standing behind him, and the Pradhan, Senapati Mankoji and Dewan Ramanna Pundit were sitting on a carpet in front. There was a silver torch burning on a stand, and the night was dark with over-hanging masses of clouds, and quite still. A small knot of men of the King's retinue smoked their pipes, or chewed betel and nut at a distance, under a huge mango tree, talking in low tones, by the light of a monster torch; and another and larger group were similarly occupied by the side of the palanquins and horses outside the gate.

"He would not even look at the presents,"[62] said Dewan Ramanna Pundit, "and declared that they were an insult to him and unworthy of the Maharaja who sent them. He was foaming and fuming with passion. It is quite true that he gave Nagore up to the commander of his Hussars, one Fischer, for two lakhs of rupees, to be looted and ransacked to his heart's content. The merchants heard of his approach and hid their treasures, and so the Frenchman thought it best to dispose of Nagore that way. He could not, of course, get much at Kivalur by way of looting, but he spared nothing. This Lally is not at all like Dupleix. He threatens that unless the balance of the bond-money, together with compound interest for the past nine years, is paid to him at once, he will sack and burn Tanjore, take the Maharaja and the royal family prisoners, and send them as slaves to Mauritius."

"That is easier said than done," remarked Senapati Mankoji.

"But all the same, we have come to such a pass!" observed the Sanyasi sadly. "Men who were waiting at our gates for an audience, paying us tolls, and begging us for petty trade-privileges, dictate to us now, and dare to threaten the descendant of the Great Sivajji and Venkaji with chains and slavery! O these Feringhis, these Feringhis, they are a most wonderful people, we must admit!"

"Is there not a prophetic figure of one of their race[63] on the tower of the Great Brahathiswara temple, more than a thousand years old?" remarked Ramanna Pundit, "And does not that indicate that they will one day rule this land? Only last year, the Nawab of Bengal, who is the greatest feudatory of the Great Moghul, was put to a shameful rout by the young English officer,[64] who played the devil with us at Devicota. It is God's will."

"That is nonsense;" said the Sanyasi drily. "The Nayak Kings put in the Vaishnavite figures on the tower of the temple about a hundred and fifty years ago; and a Dane, Roelant Crape by name, who visited the kingdom in the reign of Raghunatha Nayak and helped in the work, slyly introduced his own figure too. The great Rajaraja Chola, who built the temple about eight centuries back, never put those figures in and knew nothing of the foreigners, who were, according to their own account, little more than barbarians in those days. But what is this that I hear Ramanna, is it true that this audacious Frenchman blew a score of holy Brahmins at Tiruvarur from the mouth of a cannon?"

"It is but too true," replied Ramanna Pundit. "Six Brahmin trustees of the temple at Tiruvarur, not twenty, were blown off the mouth of a cannon because he mistook them for spies. The fact is that, trembling for the safety of the temple on the approach of an invading army, these Brahmins hastened to pay their respects to Lally, anxious to propitiate him and win his good-will. He mistook them for spies and had them blown from the mouth of a cannon, unheeding their protestations of innocence and piteous prayers. Surely, his days will be cut off in shame and ignominy!"

"There was a time," said the Sanyasi sorrowfully, "when in that very town of Tiruvarur, a righteous King deliberately drove his chariot over the body of his son and heir, because the prince had carelessly killed a calf while driving through

the streets; such was his sense of justice.[65] Now comes a foreigner and blows six holy Brahmins from the cannon's mouth, for no other fault than showing him honour and seeking to win his favour by fair means. There is food for reflection for you Pratap, and for the Senapati."

"I shall avenge this if I am a soldier," said Mankoji bravely; "the English would never have committed such an atrocity. These Frenchmen, as I have always said, are as unscrupulous as they are rapacious, and they are such bigots."

"The English are more steady and politic, perhaps," said the Sanyasi, "but there is no saying what these foreigners will or will not do. But we are helplessly entangled in their net now and must submit to the inevitable. You should represent the gravity of the situation fully and ask for urgent help from Trichinopoly and from Madras. If the Nawab and the English forsake us now, we are indeed lost."

"I have already sent messengers to Madras," replied the Pradhan, "as soon as the French marched on Nagore. I shall now send a messenger to Trichinopoly, which has sent us a small detachment and promised more soon."

"Ask the Nawab to get us reinforcements from the Tondaman[66] and the Setupati," continued the Sanyasi, "and let the English send us troops and what artillery they can spare, and also send a fleet direct from Madras to attack Karaikal. If his base of operations be thus assailed, this daring and profane Frenchman, who is running amok through the country, will soon return the way he came. We should also gird up our loins and march out to meet him. It will not do to allow him much farther into our country, sacking villages and towns and blowing off innocent Brahmins from the cannon's mouth. You must not wait for him, Pratap, to knock at your doors".

"I should ill become the throne, if I were so shameless, or cowardly," replied the King. "I shall march out myself at the head of the army to meet this daring marauder. To every man upon this earth, hale or sickly, king or beggar, death cometh soon or late; and how can man die nobler than fighting bravely for the ashes of his fathers and the temples of his gods, in defence of home and hearth and those who trust and depend on him?"

"You need not take the field in person, Pratap;" replied the Sanyasi. "Such a course would weaken the capital, which is the heart of the State, and it would be honouring the invader too highly. Let the Senapati, or his lieutenant Siddoji, march out and check his further advance. But this invasion, based on an apparently plausible ground, might have been avoided, if, instead of treacherously murdering Chanda Saheb[67] in violation of the most sacred oaths, you had followed my advice and tactfully wrested the bond from him, or persuaded him to give you a receipt for the amount. That would have been to our advantage in every way. This sin, accruing from the foul murder of six holy Brahmins at Tiruvarur, seems to be a just visitation of the Almighty's wrath at the violation of sacred oaths and the cold-blooded murder of Chanda Saheb."

"With all deference and respect to the Swamiji and his great wisdom," rejoined the Senapati Mankoji warmly, "I must confess that the balancing of the lives of six holy Brahmins with that of a *Mlechha,* who was the most wicked even of his kind,—did he not substitute a brick for the Koran and deceive the Nayak queen?[68]—and regarding this devilish Frenchman as the direct instrument of Divine Dispensation seem to me to be quite absurd. Chanda Saheb had already made over the bond to the French and no subsequent act of his could have cancelled it. He was always their friend and was instrumental in their getting a footing in our country; in

fact, he boasted that he made a present of Karaikal to them. I have explained to the Maharaja my reasons for slaying such an inveterate enemy; and if I violated sacred oaths in doing so, it was certainly from no personal motive, or for my own family aggrandisement, but solely in the best interests of the Kingdom; and I believe God will not forget that fact in judging me for that 'cold-blooded murder,' as the Swamiji has been pleased to call it."

"Well, well," put in the King, anxious to avert an unpleasant scene between the two most useful of his counsellors, "it is a point on which the Pundit Rao, I mean the *Swamiji*, and the Senapati can never agree. It is irrevocable now, and no wise man should waste time or thought on what is past remedy. The Pradhan will note the Swamiji's advice and send immediately to Trichinopoly for more aid, and also another messenger to Madras, urging the English to attack Karaikal by sea. Our Senapati will get ready to march against the enemy as early as possible."

"I hope to give him battle within a fortnight," replied Mankoji, "and by God's grace, drive him out of the country."

"May the great Mahadev be merciful unto us, His children!" said the Sanyasi fervently.

"But there is one thing more to be done," observed the King "It is not safe for the Swamiji to live here any longer; the invader may overrun these parts any time, and though the Vallam fortress is strong and well garrisoned, it is far less safe than Tanjore, and we shall need the Swamiji's advice constantly at this crisis. The family should at once remove into the fort at Tanjore, and the Amatya will send the necessary conveyances and escort to-morrow morning."

"Be it so, Pratap, and I thank you for your kind solicitude," replied the Sanyasi. "A poor old ascetic like myself need fear no one, but there are others. I have been

very happy here these seven years, though I did not expect to live so long when I first came here; and looking back on a long, eventful, and chequered life, I cannot remember any other period of such genuine happiness. The great Mahadev has been very merciful unto me, and He seems to have preserved my useless life even for the sake of the little orphan. My only care now is to bestow her on some worthy young man, and then I shall go away to Benares to breathe my last at the feet of Viswanath."

"It will be time to think of all that after these troublous days are past;" replied the King. "My Amatya told me that my learned friend's daughter, Clavirunda Bai, is now a very beautiful damsel and a great Sanskrit scholar. We must find her a husband befitting her high state and attainments; but all in God's good time, after this threatening storm is over."

The assembly then broke up and the royal party left for Tanjore immediately.

CHAPTER XI

FORTUNE FAVOURS THE BRAVE

On the morning of the 9th of August, 1758, there was a knock at the front door of the palatial mansion inside the larger fort of Tanjore, in which the Sanyasi was living. The French cannon had been incessantly thundering at the fortifications for a week past, and a small breach six feet wide, had been effected on the 7th, near the southeast corner of the small fort. What with the noise of the artillery, the hurly-burly of a siege, and the excitement and anxiety at the breach effected by the enemy, few had slept well during the period. Senapati Mankoji had with half his army, nearly 3,000 horse and 5,000 foot, met the French in the open country and given battle on the 24th of July, but Lally had routed and compelled him to retreat into the Tanjore Fort for safety

and to assume the defensive. The English sent two small reinforcements from Trichinoply, consisting of English sepoys and artillerymen and *Kalla* irregulars from the Pudukota country, and a larger reinforcement was daily expected in feverish eagerness. Pratap Singh fully realised how uneasy lies the head that wears a crown, and his ministers vied with one another in supervising the arduous labours of the siege. The citizens, one and all, rose equal to the occasion, and were determined never to yield to the ruthless invader who had blown innocent Brahmins from the cannon's mouth and who threatened to burn and sack their ancestral homes. Even timid Brahmins and confirmed fatalists were fired with unusual courage, and volunteered to help the soldiers in their wearisome toil. The Hindus generally disliked the French for their religious intolerance, which was very marked in those days. Even the women encouraged their husbands and brothers in their heroic defence. The spirit of the last of the Nayak Kings, Vijayaraghava,[69] who, when the Madura forces stormed the fort and appeared at the palace gate, blew up the Zenana with gunpowder and then dashed out of the palace with his son Mannaru, sword in hand, to meet a glorious death, seemed to have returned after eighty-five years, to fill the garrison with something of its own immortal heroism; and the shattered tower over the Nayak Zenana, at the north-west corner of the palace, was proudly looked upon as a beacon of noble inspiration by many of the besieged. But the breach made on the fort and the non-appearance of further help from Trichinopoly began to dismay even the bravest heart; and the cessation of firing on the part of the enemy after effecting the breach, was inexplicable and gave rise to wild conjectures. Was the enraged Frenchman planning a storming of the breach on the night, or was he meditating some more mysterious and irresistible plan of attack? Why was he apparently idle after making such a breach and why did he not promptly follow

it up? The night of the 8th, with its ominous silence, was one of acute anxiety to the King, his ministers, and military officers, and not a soldier or volunteer was allowed to rest that night, or even lay down his arms. But many of those who were not actively engaged in the defence of the town, were, by the cessation of firing and the very lack of sleep for a week soon precipitated into her warm and welcome embraces, and slept more soundly than they had ever done before in their lives. This happened to Havaldar Ragoji too: having kept awake till a late hour, he was sound asleep in the morning, and so the knock at the door had to be repeated three or four times before he got up in a fright. He found that someone was seeking entrance and that his master, the Sanyasi, who had already bathed and was walking in the small garden by the side of the house, was calling out to him to see who knocked.

"I am going," cried the Havaldar in reply to his master, and went to the door and unfastened the three massive iron bolts. To his immense chagrin, he saw Venkoba standing on the steps, holding his pony by the reins. Some people always forget the shortness of this life, and nurse carefully even a trifling slight or injury, fancied or real. Ragoji was one of this unfortunate class. He had not forgiven Venkoba for having slighted him twelve years ago, as recorded in the opening chapter of this story.

"What do you want here at this ungodly hour, you and your black devil of a pony?" demanded he sulkily, by way of reply to Venkoba's courteous greeting.

"Why are you sour and sullen, Havaldarji, this thrice happy and blessed morning?" replied Venkoba good-humouredly. "Do you think the cock will not crow, or the sun not rise, aye, or good luck come to us, until you have had your sleep out? Prithee, hold this black devil as you call her, for a few minutes, and let me go in and report the

Maharaja's message to His Holiness."

This was adding insult to injury; to be suddenly called out of his pleasant and restful sleep to hold Venkoba's pony for him was indeed past bearing, and the Havaldar angrily replied: "Hold her yourself or let her go where she likes. I am not your syce. Tell me the news, and I shall myself inform His Holiness."

Venkoba was evidently in no mood to parry, or pick up a quarrel; he tied the pony by her reins to a pillar of the shed in front of the house, and walked in, taking no further notice of the irate Havaldar. He knew the house well, and he had heard the Sanyasi calling out from the garden; so he entered the garden by a side door, and prostrated himself on the ground on nearing the holy man. On being bidden to rise, he got up and stood in respectful silence, his arms crossed on his breast and the fingers of his right hand over his mouth.

"What news, Venkoba?" asked the Sanyasi. "Have the French stormed the breach, that you have come in such haste and so early?"

"Far other and most happy news, Your Holiness," replied Venkoba joyfully. "Our enemies have fled and their leader has probably fallen. We are all saved by the blessing of God and Your Holiness. The Maharaja ordered me to report these gladsome tidings."

"Mahadev be praised! Mahadev be praised!" exclaimed the Sanyasi. "The God of our fathers has not forsaken us in the hour of trouble, and He has been pleased to listen to our prayers. But how did it happen, Venkoba? You are a soldier; tell me the manner of it and why the enemy fled so."

"It came about thus :" replied the soldier, "we were awaiting the enemy at the breach ready armed, fearing a sudden midnight attack....."

At this stage, the Havaldar entered with our heroine, whose innocent slumber had not suffered much during the siege. She came, and stood by the Sanyasi's side to listen to Venkoba's tale.

"Are you too up so early, my little one?" said the Sanyasi fondly, on seeing her.

"I heard some one knocking at the door, and came to see what it was about," replied she, looking at Venkoba.

"Proceed, Venkoba", said the Sanyasi, and the soldier resumed his report:

"About midnight, our scouts noticed troops coming cautiously towards the breach in the dark. We thought it was the enemy and were about to open fire, when another scout came galloping in to inform us that they were reinforcements from Trichinopoly. A body of English sepoys and cannoners and some hundred more of *Kalla* irregulars soon arrived, and we quietly, took them in. There was an *English Officer* with them, a clever young man, who it appears out-manouvered the enemy in the dark and brought in the help. This officer told us why the enemy were so idle and silent. They had no powder at all and not enough food to last for even a week on half-rations; there was hopeless dissension in their camp, the general holding the breach to be impracticable, while his officers were for storming it at once. They were discussing this the whole of yesterday, hence their silence. Last evening, they got news that an English fleet from Madras was about to attack Karaikal, and the French general therefore decided to raise the siege and return to Karaikal at once. When he learnt last night that more help was on its way to us, he ordered the retreat to commence this morning. The English officer who brought all this news, urged our Senapati to make a cavalry sortie at once, in order to do as much damage to the enemy as possible, and to hasten their retreat; but our Senapati, like the proverbial

scalded cat, would not listen to it."

"That is not the way a soldier should speak of his general, Venkoba;" said the Sanyasi sharply. "Why do you forget yourself in this manner?"

Venkoba knew that anything against Mankoji would find favour with the Sanyasi, but he did not know that the latter was not so foolish or vain as to allow any laxity of discipline in a subordinate officer like him.

"I crave forgiveness, Your Holiness," said the soldier in a humble tone. "I did not mean any offence or disrespect to the Senapati. I am sorry for the words that have foolishly escaped my lips."

"Who fails to guard his tongue will end in trouble and distress : knowest thou not that simple truth, Venkoba? Well then, proceed."

"When the Senapati refused to lead a cavalry sortie to harass the enemy," resumed Venkoba, "the English officer offered to lead one himself, though he had just come from Trichinopoly; and he persuaded the Senapati to let him do so![70] He got together some cavalry, mostly volunteers, and led us out to attack the enemy at about 4 A.M."

"You were one of the party?"

"Yes, Your Holiness. We marched quietly and secretly at first, but on nearing their encampment and seeing they were busy packing up, we galloped into them with a loud hurrah and a shout, and the English officer was the foremost of us. I can ride well, Your Holiness, and none better in our cavalry, as the prizes I have won will show; but the English officer,—I never dreamt that horsemanship such as his was even possible. He was far ahead of us, and nothing could stop or turn his course. He knocked down the French general, who was however immediately surrounded and borne away by some of his officers, but is said to be still unconscious; some say that he is dead. But soon the enemy rallied, and

we had to come away, as we were so few. If only our Senapati had sent or led out a larger force, the enemy might have been greatly damaged, if not killed off. We found the Maharajah at the breach on our return, and he ordered me to report the news to Your Holiness."

"Mahadev be praised!" exclaimed the Sanyasi fervently- "But who is the gallant Englishman who has worked such wonders as you say? What is his name?"

"He came from Trichinopoly this night," replied Venkoba, "but he has been here before, they say. I forget his name now. These Feringhis do not name themselves after their gods or saints, like us. They have only one god and no saints perhaps, and they give themselves all sorts of curious names, stone, wood, hill, dale, crow, bear, black, green; in fact, anything in creation seems to do for them. This officer's name is some 'ton'; yes, it is Shuttleton; no, Kettleton; no something like it, I forget now, Your Holiness."

"Lyttelton?" asked the Sanyasi.

"The very name, Your Holiness; yes, Lyttelton is his name Surely, nothing is unknown to Your Holiness."

"Very well, Venkoba, I am very glad to hear it is all over and so happily. Tell the Maharaja from me that I said so, and that I wish to see this English officer. No, you need not say anything, only take this note and give it to the Amatya."

So saying he wrote a few words on a bit of paper and gave it to Venkoba, who received it with both hands, bowing low. Then the soldier again prostrated himself before the Sanyasi and went out, only to find that his pony was missing. He therefore, returned home on foot, vowing vengenance on the surly Havaldar, whom he suspected of having let the animal loose.

CHAPTER XII

CONSULTING THE STARS

On the evening of the 11th of August, while all Tanjore was still joyfully commemorating the providential relief of the town, the Sanyasi was busily engaged in the upper floor of his house, comparing his grand-daughter's horoscope with those of some eligible young men which he had secured. The famous astrologer, Dewan Ramanna Pundit, was with him to give his advice, as also his brother, the Amatya. There were two diagrams drawn on the floor in front of Ramanna Pundit, with the green leaves of the Indian bean, and there was also a small heap of cowries to aid him in his calculations. A number of loose palmyrah cadjans, besmeared liberally with turmeric, each containing a horoscope, afforded the material for the astrological problems, to be solved.

"These five will not do," declared the Dewan emphatically, throwing down five of the cadjans on the ground. "They are all more or less pure, while the girl's horoscope has, as I told you, nearly four and a half units of evil influence; these are out of the question."

"But what about your brother's son," asked the Sanyasi. "I saw the boy more than once during the siege, and I was well impressed. You know his grand-father, your father Madhava Pundit, and I were school-fellows. I well remember a fight we had once between his party and mine in the river-bed, and we gave them a good thrashing. I should like to make amends by giving my grand-daughter in marriage to his grand-son. What say you to his horoscope? It has some evil influence to counteract, as far as I can see."

The Amatya looked at his brother's face eagerly. He knew that the Sanyasi's grand-daughter would inherit the village of Malayur, and it would become her husband's property eventually.[71] He suspected also that his brother

himself, being a widower, had an eye on the rich and beautiful heiress, but he was pretty certain that the Sanyasi would not agree to such a match. He knew nothing of astrology, though he believed in it to some extent, and so he waited for his brother's reply eagerly. The Dewan compared the two horoscopes long, made many calculations, nodded his head a good deal, muttered some astrological gibberish, and declared finally : "No, I am afraid it will not do either. It has some evil influence, as you say, but it is less than one and a half units, some astrologers will make it only one. Unless there is at least three to four units of evil influence in the male horoscope, the husband of this girl will meet with a very early death."

"Heaven forbid!" explained the Sanyasi involuntarily.

"Her influence should be adequately matched and counteracted;" continued the Dewan. "So much of malignant influence from Mars, Rahu and Saturn is fortunately rare in female horoscopes, or the world would abound more in unmarried women or widows. I cannot remember more than two or three such in my experience, and it has been pretty wide."

The Amatya's face fell on hearing this, and the Sanyasi seemed as keenly disappointed.

"Then you are sure that your nephew's horoscope too is out of the question?" asked the latter.

"You know how proud and happy we would feel, myself and my brother, at an alliance with your family," replied the Dewan, "not to speak of the rare beauty and accomplishments of your grand-child; nor are we unaware of the richness of her dowry. A less scrupulous man, or one having less faith in astrology, would perhaps try to mislead you; but facts are facts, and I have too much faith in the noble science to hide or varnish them. I cannot honestly advise my brother here to consent to the match; it is so regrettable, and the union

would have been so very appropriate in every way, but I am afraid it cannot be. Of course, my brother and you must decide finally; I can only advise."

"Of course, it cannot be, when you are so sure about it;" said the Sanyasi. "The long life and happiness of the parties are the most important points in a marriage."

"Yes, certainly," echoed the Amatya regretfully.

"It is a great pity, all the same," continued the Sanyasi, "and I am at my wit's end now as to what to do next. I was counting so much on this match, as I noticed some evil influence in the boy's horoscope. Bayee has just completed her twelfth year, but taking after her mother, she looks much older. I have been feeling feeble of late, and something tells me that I am nearing the end. I should like to see her wedded at once, and then go away to Benares before death overtakes me. Can either of you think of any other eligible boys, or even young men?"

"There are hardly any," replied the Dewan musingly, with the tip of his right forefinger on his lips. "We can have a wide field of choice in Maharashtra, but here we are so few, and not all are socially high enough to be thought of by you. The Maratha Brahmins here are generally poor."

"I do not consider honest poverty a crime, or wealth and, high status as infallible badges of virtue and honour," replied the Sanyasi. "I was myself poorest of the poor as a boy, and I know nothing more wholesome for an honest young man of pluck and determination, to get the best out of this life, than the pinch of poverty. Want may keep down genius long, but when it strives and rises to the top in the end, you find the genuine stuff, and no spurious imitation, or reflected shadow of ancient merit. The scion of a noble and wealthy family rarely distinguishes himself in the world, except as a monster of vice or depravity, and he who has gold mohurs to play with in his youth has often to beg for

copper coins in his old age. As the Tamil poet truly says, the riches of the fool do more harm than the poverty of the wise.[72] I am therefore not at all particular about social status. If either of you know of any poor youth who is otherwise of good report, I wish you to tell me. In fact, these five horoscopes, which you first rejected, are of such youths only, and one of them is the grandson of a poor priest who was my school-fellow. I must select some one soon."

"Yes, I know the matter is urgent," replied the Dewan. "There is already an idle rumour that the girl has come of age, and that it is kept secret."

"That is a lie," rejoined the Sanyasi. "but even if true, I see no great harm in it. The custom of infant-marriage now prevailing among us is one of later growth; our ancient forefathers, as our *Puranas* and the very *Mantras* we still use during the marriage ceremony clearly show, never married so early."

"That may be so," remarked the Dewan, "but the custom has now become so universal that it has to be followed. It would be impertinent on my part to quote the texts in this presence, but the marriage of girls before the 9th year is clearly ordained."

"It is not necessary, and I can quote you all the conflicting authorities on the subject, if you want them," replied the Sanyasi, with somewhat of his old impatience and hauteur. "But it is not a sign of wisdom to follow blindly any injunction or custom, especially when the authorities differ as in this case. We have then a right to examine, to weigh in the scales of reason and experience, and to judge for ourselves.[73] The *Shastras* are meant only for our welfare and convenience, and even like the material possessions we inherit from our ancestors, we have a right to use them as is best for us, only we should not put them to any vile use. Susruta[74] and other medical authorities are emphatically

against early marriage. The injunctions in favour of the present custom are only commendatory, and not mandatory; in fact, marriage itself is not compulsory; and as you are no doubt aware, there are Brahmins in Kerala, truly *vedic* in many of their customs, who marry their girls only after they come of age, and their women sometimes remain unwedded throughout life. But I am not desirous of breaking the custom in this case. It is not without its advantages; and in this particular instance, an innovation would be harmful, as a helpless orphan may have to face much social persecution and tyranny. That is why I want to have her wedding as soon as possible."

"I do not know how you would take it," said Dewan Ramanna Pundit, in a tone of hesitation and uneasy diffidence, "and I venture to make the proposal solely because the girl's horoscope does not agree with any other and it agrees fairly well with my horoscope. My only child has no male offspring, and I am naturally anxious to have a son for the continuation of the family and the salvation of my soul. I shall be only forty-five next birth-day, and I did not marry again after my first wife's death, only because I thought my daughter would give birth to a male child soon. She has become a chronic invalid, and there is little chance now of her presenting me with a grandson. Ever since I saw your grandchild at Vallam early this year, I have been thinking of a second marriage, but I did not mention it till now for obvious reasons. All that I can say is, that, should you be pleased to bestow her hand on me, I shall spare nothing to make her happy in life."

The Sanyasi was quite taken aback by the proposal at first, but he had time to recover from his surprise as the Dewan proceeded in his speech, and he replied calmly—"I never thought of it before; I must think over it; I must have some time. You say your horoscope is agreeable?"

"Yes, fairly well, I may even say, very well;" replied the Dewan eagerly; and taking out a cadjan leaf from a pocket of his jacket, he continued, "Here it is, and you may judge for yourself. You will observe that there are at least three clear units of evil influence in my horoscope, and some will make it out as even three and a half units; in fact, my first wife's untimely death was due solely to this fact, our horoscopes not having been properly compared before our marriage. So it agrees admirably with your grand-daughter's."

"Well, I shall think over it and let you know. I never thought of it before. I must also consult the girl," replied the Sanyasi.

"Consult the girl!" exclaimed the Dewan, in evident astonishment. "Who ever heard of such a thing? She is a mere child, and what can she know of these things? We in this kingdom look upon Swamiji as the embodiment of all wisdom and learning, and guide ourselves by his advice. It has been so for over a generation. And now Swamiji talks of consulting his own grand-daughter, a mere child, about this marriage! It is strange indeed."

"You said just now, Ramanna," replied the Sanyasi, with just the shade of a faint smile on his lips, "that there was a rumour Bayee had come of age, and now you call her a mere child who is entitled to no voice in the disposal for life of even her own person. But be that as it may, you are sure the horoscopes agree well?"

"That is what made me think of it," replied the Dewan unabashed. "They agree very well indeed; three and a half against four, *Sevvai dosha* against *Kalathra dosha*, they cancel each other, and there is no fear of danger on either side."

"Well, I shall think over it and let you know," said the Sanyasi, gathering up the cadjan leaves; and his visitors took leave of him and went away. Left to himself, the Sanyasi

began to think. He was sorely perplexed, and indeed at his wit's end as he had said. He knew something of astrology, and felt the force of the Dewan's objections to the horoscopes he had been able to secure. He had never liked the Amatya, but his son seemed to be of a different type, and he had selected the boy as the most eligible match in the kingdom. He knew that astrology had played him a treacherous trick in the case of his son Murari but that was perhaps due to the deficiency of his own knowledge, and so he consulted the Dewan this time; his faith was too deep to be effaced by even such a calamity. Since he left his pleasant villa at Vallam and came to live within the noisy town, he was frequently feeling a shooting pain about the cardiac region, an unaccountable weariness, and even dizziness sometimes. He told no one of this, but he felt that he had not many more days to live, and he had given up his hope of dying in holy Benares. He was therefore extremely anxious to see his beloved Bayee suitably wedded before his death. The Dewan was no doubt a good match, but for his age which was a serious obstacle; in fact, he had never thought of him before as a possible bridegroom, on that account only. And now, when pushed to a corner, he began to consider whether forty-five was after all an advanced age. Men of fifty and sixty years of age were sometimes married to girls younger than his grand-child; but then, Bayee,—the superbly beautiful girl who was the sole love and light of his old and sorrow-stricken heart; Bayee, who seemed to be a veritable Goddess of Learning, to hand her over to such a husband, his dear little innocent one to an unscrupulous and coarse man of the world, forty-five years old admittedly and looking even older, that was enough to make him shudder, and pause. A scandal, connecting the Dewan's name with that of his sister-in-law,—the young widowed sister of his deceased wife,—had once reached his ears. How could he ever look his darling Bayee in the face and make such an atrocious proposal? Bayee's

nature, he knew, was not merely intellectual and analytical; unlike such natures generally, she craved for love, and she was never happy except when surrounded by affection and loving sympathy. A harsh, or even unguarded word or look from him was enough to make her unhappy for the day, and her poetical readings had put some romantic ideas of conjugal affection and happiness into her young, innocent head. And what love could this old sinner of a Dewan offer her, or inspire in her for him? The idea of deliberately handing over his beautiful and spotless flower into such vile and slimy hands was revolting to the stern old ascetic, who had never, since his wife's demise nearly thirty years ago, even looked upon any woman with a lecherous eye. But the fates seemed to have combined against him, and his mind wavered, and he felt a helpless perplexity for almost the first time in his eventful life. And then the points in the Dewan's favour presented themselves in an imposing array before his mental vision: he had an only daughter who was herself childless and an invalid; and if a child was born to Bayee by this union, it would inherit all his own and the Dewan's property and be a mighty one in the land; a beautiful young girl should never be without some one able to shield and protect her in these days of wars and invasions, and no one could be better than the Dewan in that respect; the Dewan was not such a scoundrel as his brother the Amatya, and he probably said what he meant, when he assured him that he would spare nothing, to make his wife happy; he was only forty-five, and really loved the girl well in his own way; and lastly, he was in high favour with the Maharaja and was already looked upon as the next Pradhan. These considerations, *pro* and *con*, kept the Sanyasi's mind busy all that night, for his was not the same old iron will now, and he often caught himself talking freely, and even of his. secret hopes and fears, to all sorts of people whom he would not, in the old days, have deigned to entrust, with anything but

his commands. As the shrewd reader would have already noticed, the little Bayee, and advancing age and sorrow, had indeed imperceptibly mellowed his nature and softened his stern and self-centred masterful spirit and indomitable will. And thus he spent the night restlessly on his deer-skin bed, his mind tossed about by a hundred doubts, hopes, and fears, like a frail bark in a tempestuous sea. But his mind was clear about one thing—he would never decide in favour of the Dewan without consulting Bayee. He knew that, with her characteristic originality of thought and daring, Bayee had always been against astrology, and that what little of faith she professed to have in it, was due entirely to her regard for him and her faith in his wisdom. She had once declared against even the possibility of such a science, arguing on purely *a priori* grounds,[75] and she had more than once given her opinion on her own marriage. Whatever his own beliefs and opinions were, he felt that, with one foot in the grave, he had no right to decide the girl's fate for life without consulting her. The final decision and the responsibility of it might rest with him, but he would hear first the person most affected by it.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DELIVERER

"My first informant could not give me even your name. Somehow I was very glad when I heard of your heroic feats. We could have held out much longer; and the boastful and hotheaded Frenchman,[76] quite a different man to Duplex, was woefully short of provisions from the first, and sent two men to us, a priest who calls himself a White Brahmin dresses like one of us and seems to be a wolf in sheepskin, and a military man, asking us,—what do you think he wanted us to do?—to supply him with beef, so that he may feed well and batter our walls with his artillery! Fancy his asking us,

Hindus, to kill our sacred cows for him! We speak of a vicious horse throwing down his rider, kicking him, and then digging the ground with his hoofs to bury his corpse; this was something like it."

The speaker was no other than the Sanyasi, his companion the Englishman Lyttelton, and the scene the garden of the villa in Manambuchavadi.

"I heard of that," replied Lyttelton, who could now boast of a handsome, sun-burnt face, and fine moustaches. "Count Lally is a famous and able soldier, but he does not know the people of this country, nor their ways and customs."

"I cannot compliment him on his military ability seeing how careless and unguarded he and his men were when you galloped into them; it almost cost him his life".

"That was sheer panic; they never even dreamt that such a thing would be attempted."

"No disciplined army should show panic in any circumstances, and no true general should lay himself open to such a surprise;" replied the Sanyasi. "I was told that even the *Kalla* irregulars laughed at their helpless confusion and fright."

"The French are brave soldiers, no doubt," replied the Englishman, "I must admit that, though they are the natural and hereditary enemies of our nation; but they are liable to sudden panic, in fact, sudden bursts of any passion are quite in their line."

"I have no love for any of the Feringhis, no offence to you," replied the Sanyasi with a smile, as he turned in his walk in the garden and the Englishman with him. "But comparatively, I confess I rather admire your own people for their steadiness, their coolness in danger, their pluck and indomitable perseverance, their deliberateness of purpose, and their high sense of duty."

"I am glad to know you find something to admire in us after all," replied Lyttelton with a laugh.

"But it is that very steadiness and single-eyed persistence[77] which I also fear most;" continued the Sanyasi thoughtfully. "Our own people, at least in these degenerate days, are wanting in those very qualities. I do not much fear the French who also lack them more or less; but you Englishmen are different, and your very dullness of imagination and non-volatility are in your favour, when you have to deal with people like us, and your perseverance is simply marvellous. You have also that supreme self-conceit and confidence in yourselves which anticipate and command success and will accept no failure; and being like exiles here from a distant land, all engaged in one pursuit only, you are united and your strength is not dissipated by dissensions and conflicting interests. I should not at all be surprised if, in the course of the next twenty or thirty years, you sweep the French and the Dutch clean out of the country, get the Great Moghul and the disunited and factious Marathas and the Rajaputs under your thumb, and have the whole of the sacred *Bharatavarsha* under your control, if not under your direct sway."

"We don't want the country; we only want free trading rights, and security of person and property;" replied the Englishman. "We can never settle down in such a climate permanently, nor is it our ambition to found an empire in the East."

"The Frenchman Dupleix did not think so, and he has shown you the way to it;" rejoined the Sanyasi. "That man had the making of a successful despot in him. He was a very shrewd man too, and the first to break their rule, and make a Hindu, Ananda Ranga Pillay, his chief *dubash*.[78] With such a leader, you would, with your other qualities, have already laid the foundations of an empire here. Though you

profess to be only traders, I cannot for a moment believe that you will reject sovereignty if you get it in the course of your trade; it is not human nature."

There was a sudden scream near by, and a sweet female voice cried out in alarm and terror: "Babaji, smake! I am killed by a snake!"

The cry was in Marathi which Lyttelton understood imperfectly, but he at once ran towards the spot whence the cry came. He saw there, behind a jasmine bush, a beautiful Brahmin girl stamping her right foot on the ground frantically and crying in terror, and he found that a snake had entwined itself round her leg above the anklet. To rush to her aid, bend down, and take hold of the ugly reptile deftly by its neck between his thumb and fingers, was the work of an instant, and then he so crushed the snake that its coils loosened, and he was able to pull it off her leg and hold it out at arm's length. He asked her in Hindustani whether the snake had bitten her, and she answered "Yes," and showed two small drops of blood, just like two rubies set on the soft alabaster skin, on the left calf. He at once threw down the half-dead reptile and crushed its life out with the heel of his boot in an instant; then stooping again, he caught hold of the girl's leg and squeezed the flesh round the bitten part so hard between his fingers, that she screamed again in pain. He wiped out with his handkerchief the blood that oozed from the tooth-marks, and applying his mouth to the wounds, sucked out some more blood and spat it on the ground, telling her afterwards not to be afraid, for she was cured and quite safe.

The Sanyasi who had followed him was the mute and astonished witness of all this doctoring, which however did not occupy more than a few minutes. The girl ran towards him on being freed by the stranger, though limping slightly in her left leg. She told him that she came there to cull

flowers, and that while trying to pluck a rose which was too high for her, she raised herself on her toes, but in vain; when she sank on her heels again, it was on something soft and slippery which at once coiled itself round her right leg and bit her on the left.

"And it is a venomous snake too," said the Sanyasi, looking at the head of the reptile, and fondly caressing the girl who now clung to his side tenderly.

"Yes, so it is," observed Lyttelton. "Ask her whether she feels any shooting pain going up the bitten leg."

"No," replied the girl, "there is some pain only on the spot."

"That is due only to my squeezing the poisoned blood out of it; that will pass off soon;" said Lyttelton.

"And you risked your life, sucking that deadly venom'" said the Sanyasi, looking with admiration and gratitude on the Englishman. "You have saved her life, endangering your own."

"There was not much risk in it," said Lyttelton trying to make light of his action. "The bite was not a deep one, and I first squeezed out the poisoned blood; besides, I have no sores, in my mouth."

"Not many of you, Feringhis, can say so, I am afraid," remarked the Sanyasi, "seeing what unclean lives you lead out here. You have not only been my country's deliverer, covering yourself with glory in the act, but you have placed me personally today under such a great and invaluable obligation. How can I ever hope to repay such a debt?"

"O don't mention it; it is only a little kindly act, which any one will gladly do to another;" replied Lyttelton, almost blushing. "But who is this young lady, whom I have had the honour of doing some little service to today? May I ask that without offence?"

"O you don't know Bayee!" exclaimed the Sanyasi, forgetting that such ignorance was only natural in a stranger. "She is my grand-daughter, that is, the daughter of my only son; both her parents died on the day she was born. Well, she is the only link between me and this world now, and so you may imagine how happy and grateful I feel. The great Mahadev has indeed been very merciful unto me today. Do let me show my pleasure and gratitude to you in some way. Tell me, prithee, what can I do for you."

"I pray you, don't speak of it any more; it is not worth it. I am indeed very glad and pleased that I happened to be near by at the time;" replied the Englishman.

"Not many, I am afraid, would have displayed the same presence of mind and resourcefulness, or risked their own lives so readily," rejoined the Sanyasi. "You must let me show my gratitude in some way, just as a memento of the incident, if nothing else."

"I shall feel more than compensated if the lady will permit me to present this to her, the immediate cause of her accident;" replied Lyttelton, plucking the beautiful large rose which the girl had tried to reach, and giving it to her. She took it from his hands, blushing with pleasure, modesty and gratitude, and she coyly remarked to her grand-father: "The gentleman is as chivalrous as he is brave, and he is only adding to the priceless favour he has already done."

She said these words in fluent and faultless Hindustani, and they went direct to Lyttelton's heart, and made him inexpressibly glad and proud.

"You don't know him, Bayee, do you?" asked the Sanyasi, turning to his grand-child. "This is the very gentleman whom I first met at Srisailam, as I have told you. He came to kill then, and not to save a life, and he it was who so valiantly, as you heard Venkoba tell the other day, delivered us all from the siege."

"I almost shot you dead then," remarked Lyttelton laughing, "and it is only fair that I should make some amends for it the other way."

"Now too he has killed,—the venomous reptile," said Bayee smiling. "His acts are like those of Vishnu, *sishta paripalanam and dhushta nigraham*[79] protecting the good and destroying the wicked, even as a true King's should be."

"Well said!" exclaimed the Sanyasi, greatly pleased. "But all the same, I wish to mark the happy occasion in some way. Bayee, go and bring the emerald brooch which the Maharaja sent you the other day, in appreciation of the Sanskrit prayer you composed for the speedy relief of the city. Give it to this gentleman, who was chosen by God to relieve us, and let him wear it as a slight souvenir of our gratitude."

The girl at once ran into the house, and returning with the jewel, gave it into the Sanyasi's hands.

"Give it to him yourself;" said he jocularly. "He saved your life, not mine; me he tried to shoot, as he himself shamelessly confessed even now."

The girl blushed profusely at this, and then gave the jewel into Lyttelton's hands. He took it with a graceful bow, and looking at it, exclaimed; "Why, this is a magnificent jewel! A splendid jewel! I should be very loth indeed to deprive the young lady of it. It would gain more beauty and lustre by her wearing it, whereas it would lose half its worth with me, a rough soldier, and become like a true Toledo blade in the hands of a coward."

"You are waxing more and more oriental in your speech, and you have evidently been reading some of our poets. Do yon know Sanskrit, or Persian?" inquired the Sanyasi, not ill pleased.

"We have a Mussulman captain at Trichinopoly who is

a Persian scholar, and we are friends," replied Lyttelton. "He was in your service before, as a Naik I believe, and perhaps you may even know him. His name is Shere Khan. He used to read and explain his favourite poets to me, and as has been well said, the common fibre of the plantain tree gets sweet-scented by associating with the jasmine in the garland."

"That shows you also know how to profit by good company," remarked the Sanyasi.

"Go in, Bayee," continued he, turning to the girl, "and do not go too near these bushes hereafter. I must tell Raghava to have the surroundings cleaned better and more frequently."

The girl went into the house, after bashfully casting a parting glance of sincere gratitude and pleasure at the Englishman.

"I presume she is married and has a husband already according to the Brahmin custom,"[80] remarked Lyttelton, looking wistfully at the retiring figure.

"No, she is not," replied the Sanyasi. "and that is what is troubling my mind just now. I have not yet been able to select a proper youth, and she ought to have been wedded long ago, according to our custom as you say."

"But it is a stupid custom, you must admit," rejoined Lyttelton. "What sense is there in uniting children together for life, when they could not possibly know what it is to love or to hate each other? The result must mean life-long misery in many cases. And I am told you have no divorce at all among you."

"The woman has not, though a man can put off his wife even without the show of a pretext and she can only claim a petty maintenance. A man may marry as many wives as he pleases, while a woman may not remarry now even on the death of her husband," replied the Sanyasi.

"That makes it all the more cruel and culpable, to give away young girls in marriage to become the mere sport of the whims and caprices of their lords. I wonder your women-folk submit to it willingly."

"No one asks them;" replied the Sanyasi. "But it was not always thus, and our fore-fathers followed more reasonable customs and even allowed young women to choose their own husbands openly. Early marriage is not however an unmixed evil, as you seem to think; we have no old maids as you must have among you, and it protects the chastity of our women."

"If you have no old maids, you have young widows doomed to life-long celibacy," retorted Lyttelton; "and as for female chastity, I should say that such extraordinary safeguards are not very complimentary to your women. Worse even than infant-marriage, is the barbarous custom of *sati*[81] which you have, and which is the greatest blot on your civilisation. It is almost impossible for a foreigner to believe that Brahmins like you, who are so educated, talk such high philosophy and live such pure and selfless lives, condemning as sin even the killing of wild beasts and venomous reptiles, can still permit, nay even force your women to mount the funeral pyre with their dead husbands. How can you be so heartless and inhuman?"

"I admit it looks cruel looked at that way;" replied the Sanyasi calmly. "But our ideas of life and death are quite different from yours. We consider this life as only one step in a ladder of innumerable rungs which reaches up to salvation. Death is but the dark inter-space between one step and another, only you have to jump clean from one rung to another of this wonderful and mysterious ladder, instead of ascending or descending in the ordinary way; and the soul goes up or down it accordingly, as its own *karma* ordains. Or to put it another way: you see a mother suckling her babe: when one breast is empty, she takes away the infant

from it and applies its lips to the other, which is full of milk; but the babe cries in pain during the intervening few moments, not knowing what is to happen; such is the pang of death, nothing more. And a *sati* believes that she will enter Heaven with her beloved lord, and so she is not afraid of death. That so many of our women cheerfully follow their husbands through the dark valley of death proves that early marriages are not so bad after all."

"I cannot grant that argument," replied Lyttelton, "for even if unborn infants were married on speculation, some of the unions are sure to prove happy by mere chance, and that will not warrant any inference. If marriage is essentially for the happiness of the uniting parties and the begetting of healthy progeny, too early marriages must be condemned. If some wives become willing *satis* as you say, I doubt whether even in such cases religious frenzy, poignant grief, the force of custom and public opinion and other causes do not play an important part; nor can you deny that some others are forced to so immolate themselves by scheming and selfish relatives, and these are really murders, and ought to be punished by law."

"Such a *sati* is nowhere enjoined or commended, and is in fact a murder, as you say:" replied the Sanyasi. "But I have detained you too long I am afraid. I hope you will come and see me occasionally, as long as you stay here. When Bayee's wedding comes off, and I hope it will be soon, I shall send you an invitation, and I request you now to honour the occasion with your presence. You can see how we celebrate our weddings, if you have not seen one before, and as you have saved her life today I shall gratefully remember that debt as long as I live, and I shall always be glad to see you. You seem to be so different from most of your countrymen and,—and I like you."

"I thank you sincerely, and believe me, the feeling is

mutual," replied Lyttelton. "Yes, I shall be delighted to attend the young lady's wedding, and I thank you for the invitation. I must also thank you for this beautiful jewel, though I am sorry to deprive her of it. Something far less valuable, at any rate, less useful to the young lady, will, I think, serve the purpose of a memento equally well, even if my act deserved all your praise."

"What you have done today is worth far more to me than a thousand emeralds like this," said the Sanyasi in an earnest and almost solemn tone. "Do keep it, I pray you; and besides, nothing else can be so appropriate, for it is her own, what Pratap, I mean the Maharaj gave her for the beautiful prayer she composed and sent him."

"I shall keep it then," replied Lyttelton, "and I shall value it even more for the giver and the occasion than for its own preciousness. I hope you will be able to get her a husband worthy of her rare beauty and attainments."

"It lies in God's hands," replied the Sanyasi, and Lyttelton bade him farewell and went away.

CHAPTER XIV

A FUNERAL AND A WEDDING

The next day, the King visited the Sanyasi, accompanied by his Amatya, ostensibly to offer his felicitations on the lucky escape of his grandchild from what might have proved a fatal accident, but really to learn the political significance, if there was any, of his interview with the Englishman. But during the course of the conversation which was, as usual, in the garden, the Sanyasi suddenly pressed his hand to his left breast, and fell down dead owing to failure of the heart's action. The King was greatly moved, and wept bitterly and long for his earliest and best friend and benefactor. When Bayee learnt that her "Babaji", he who had been father,

mother, sister, brother and friend, all in one unto her, was no more, she was simply stunned and looked dazed. Her grief was too deep for tears and she did not cry at first. Then the flood-gates of sorrow opened gradually and the poor, unfortunate girl sobbed bitterly and unceasingly, bemoaning her lot, and saying again and again that she was truly orphaned only then. Her old aunt, half dead to the world already on account of her physical infirmities and wandering mind, seemed scarcely to realise the extent of the calamity that had overtaken them. At the bidding of the King, some of her relatives came to the house to keep the girl company, but they were mostly of the greedy, grumbling, insatiable variety, and their sole refrain was the calumny of the dear departed for his neglect of them in his prosperity, and their sole object to profit as much as possible by their stay in the house. The maid-servant Sarada and Havaldar Ragoji were the only other sincere mourners in the house, and they mingled their griefs with that of the ill-starred girl whom they loved dearly, defended and praised the memory of the dead, and sought to console her grief in their own crude way. In accordance with a wish he had once casually expressed in conversation, the body of the Sanyasi was carried, by order of the King, to the garden-house at Vallam, in great pomp, and buried[82] there under the shade of his favourite mango-tree, with all the honours due to one of his exalted rank and the orange-robe. A small shrine of pure white marble, dedicated to his favourite god, Mahadev, was erected over the spot.

The King assumed direct charge of the girl's guardianship; and the queen sent for her a fornight later, and after consoling her grief, informed her that the Maharaja intended to bestow her hand on the widower Dewan who was so rich and desirable in every way. Notwithstanding the Queen's glowing account of the Dewan and his many qualifications, Bayee's heart sank within her as she heard

her doom, but she was too grief-stricken and surprised to protest against it, as she would otherwise have done, and only sobbed piteously that she could not bear to think of marriage so soon after her grandfather's death. The queen replied that it was all the more necessary to hasten the wedding, now that she had no one to take care of her, and the fortnight from that day was finally fixed for the ceremony, and the necessary preparations were ordered to commence at once.

Bayee returned home with a sore and heavy heart, and sought sympathy of her two confidants, Sarada and Ragoji. But on hearing the news, they began to congratulate her warmly, and were transported with joy at her great good luck in getting such a husband. "Why, he will soon become the Pradhanji, if rumour speaks true," exclaimed the Havaldar, "and his brother will then succeed him as Dewan. How many girls can easily get such a husband; but our Bayee is fully worthy of it and more."

"We have all heard of the fondness of elderly husbands for their young second wives," interposed Sarada joyfully, "and Bayee will become so powerful when her husband becomes the Pradhanji! Happy days for us, poor folks, then, and may she never forget her humble and loving slaves in the heyday of her luck! Even our old master never became Pradhanji. And do you know, Havaldarji," continued she, more eagerly, "they say the Dewanji's first wife had jewels worth half a lakh of rupees, some say even one lakh, and all that will become our Bayee's own now. Good luck to you, Bayee mine, and may you bless the Dewanji's house with a male child soon, to inherit all his and your vast estates and be the mightiest in the land, next only to the Maharaja himself!"

Poor Bayee's heart grew heavier on receiving these congratulations. Visitors to her old aunt had spoken before

this in her hearing of the Dewan's shameless liaison with his widowed sister-in-law, of their open bickerings and frequent *fracas* on account of his other amours, and of his being a helpless puppet in her masterful hands. In the idle scandal-mongering and spicy gossips so dear to their hearts, our women, and even men, seldom remember the sanctity and innocence of childhood, and often descrate its sacred shrine with their coarse and filthy profanity. This is due to sheer thoughtlessness, or more rarely to moral callousness; but it is always an unpardonable offence. Bayee was a victim of it on one or two occasions, and she now remembered what she had heard, shuddering at the thought of becoming the wife of such a man. She had also seen the Dewan more than once and taken a strong dislike to his lewd features and prematurely grizzled, puckered face. But what could she do now to stop this marriage, so utterly loathsome to her sorrowing heart? As her guardian, as her King, the Maharaja was the person she ought to appeal to; and after much deliberation, she wrote a long letter to him, setting forth her feelings and beseeching him by the love and regard he bore towards her grandsire to save her from the sad fate which such a marriage meant for her. She was sent for the next day by the queen, and she and the King both praised her for the skill and learning displayed in the letter, and informed her that it was her grandfather's express wish, vouched for by both the Amatya and the Dewan, that she should wed the latter, and that the King, as her guardian, was only carrying out that injunction. She wept and pleaded again piteously, declaring that her Babaji would never have intended to wed her to such a man, that he had more than once markedly shown his dislike to the Dewan and his brother; but it was all in vain and she was told that in spite of her book-lore, she was a mere child and could not understand well, much less judge for herself in such matters. Her further remonstrances produced only the impression that

she was a forward and conceited child, spoilt by her learning and her grandsire's fond indulgence, and met with little sympathy. She was sternly told to abide by what her elders considered best for her, and returned home with a heart full of vague apprehensions and bitter despondency.

On the day appointed, there came for her a gorgeous palanquin from the palace, specially decorated for the occasion, and she was carried in great pomp, dressed in a gaudy and valuable embroidered silk—the queen's present—and precious gems—the groom's gift—to the house of the Dewan, where she was united in holy wedlock in the presence of the sacred Fire, to the famous astrologer—Dewan Ramanna Pundit. The King himself was present with all his ministers and a numerous and gay retinue; thousands of holy Brahmins were sumptuously fed, and blessed the happy Dewan and his beautiful bride. Music and rejoicing and feasting and nautches continued for five days and every one seemed pleased and happy. Only one small heart was heavy and sad in that brilliant festive gathering, and it was that of the bride; another young heart was also seething with wild regret, and its owner bit his thin red lips and inwardly cursed astrology each time he gazed with rapture on her sweet and sorrowful face,—it was that of Madhava Rao, the Amatya's son. A handsome young athlete, scarcely out of his teens yet, a lover of music already known as *Nandhi* for his skill in playing on the drum, and a dreamy, romantic sort of youth, he heaved his heart in doleful sighs at the loss of such a bride, hardly realising that such thoughts were all the more sinful in him who had become her son[83] by that marriage. The Dewan, however, looked supremely happy and proud. Was it at the good luck of getting such a beautiful and educated girl to wife? Or at the prospect of a son being born to him out of her loins, to help his sinful soul in its salvation? Or at the sudden doubling, or even trebling of his riches and estate by this stroke of fortune? Or at the expectation of

being soon able to free himself from the shameful sway of his tyrannical sister-in-law and installing in her place as queen over his heart,—and what a heart it was!—and fortunes, the 'rare and radiant maiden,'[84] whose trembling little soft hand he was holding in his own begrimed and rough paw and amorously squeezing and tickling secretly? Who can say?

BOOK II[85]

"In many cases marriage involves to the weaker party a tyranny so brutal, galling, incessant and at the same time absolutely hopeless, that it forms the nearest earthly type of eternal damnation."

CHAPTER I

HER NEW HOME

The late Pundit Rao's father was a poor Maratha Brahmin. On the death of his wife, he wandered about making pilgrimages to the thousands of holy shrines from Mount Kailas to Cape Comorin, living by his wits or charity. Late in life, he settled down in Tanjore and married a poor orphan girl, and the Pundit Rao was their only child. The father did not live to see his son attain to power and fame; but before he died, he saw him wedded to a poor, but remarkably beautiful girl distantly related to his own wife. When the Pundit Rao's star began to shine, his step-sister, his father's only child by his first wife, came to Tanjore with her husband from Maharashtra, seeking his help and patronage. They lived with him for some years, and they both died suddenly of cholera one day, leaving an orphan girl in his charge. This girl was Muktamba, whom the Pundit Rao brought up affectionately and wedded to his only son Murari, and our heroine, as the reader is already aware, was the sole offspring of this union. The Pundit Rao was therefore a stranger at Tanjore, and being by nature a self-contained, proud man, he did not encourage his own mother's or his wife's local relations, a few of whom tried to ingratiate themselves with him, but finding it hopeless, left him in disgust, and thereafter occupied their leisure in vilifying his name and character as far as they could.

The Dewan therefore easily persuaded the King that his own home was the best for his new bride, and that there was no need for her to live separately with her poor and undesirable relatives any longer. The infirm old aunt was sent away to her own relatives with a small but sufficient annuity, Havaldar Ragoji was discharged, and the bride entered her new home, with her maidservant Sarada, who was kept on at her special request.

The Dewan and his brother, the Amatya Venkanna Pundit, lived separately in two adjacent houses in the same street. They had divided the ancestral property on the death of their father Madhava Pundit. Unlike the Pundit Rao's, theirs was an old and aristocratic family in Tanjore, their great-grand-father having been an influential member on the personal staff of Venkaji, the founder of the Maratha principality; and the brothers were reputed to be wealthy. The Amatya had several children, boys and girls, of whom Madhava Rao was the eldest, while the Dewan had only one child by his first wife.

After the marriage festivities were over and all the guests departed, Clavirunda Bai, who was now for the first time in her life known and called by her full natural name,—she disliked being called "Bayee" by any of her new relatives,—had time to observe and note the normal conditions of her new home. Till then she did not know who was who of the dozens who flocked around, scrutinised and freely questioned and criticised her in a familiar manner. There was first her husband, the Dewan, the head of the family, and the only other male member was his son-in-law Narahari Rao, who was employed in his office; then there was the widow Kamala Bai, the female and virtual head of the house, who was his first wife's younger sister; and Gunga Bai, his daughter, the wife of Narahari Rao, who was an invalid suffering from asthma, and childless. There were besides, two female and two male Brahmin servants and half a dozen *sudra* servants,

including Sarada. Kamala Bai was a young childless widow of about thirty-five years of age, plump as a partridge, and of short stature. Widowed in her eighteenth year, she had ever since lived with her rich sister, and after her death, was keeping house for her brother-in-law the Dewan. During her sister's lifetime, she was kept under a strict regimen suitable to her widowed state, and her orthodox and fanatical sister had even blamed her for not having become a *Sati*. She was forced to keep all fasts and penances, but not allowed to share in any feast; and her sister, who was not blind to the amorous attentions her husband secretly paid to her young sister and suspected that they were not wholly one-sided, even threatened once to drive her out of the house if such dalliance did not cease. But everything changed with her death, and Kamala Bai became the mistress of the house and of the Dewan's heart, to the scandal of the town. She soon attained so much influence over him that those who needed his official favour sought it through her, and she made this a lucrative source of private income to herself. The Dewan's daughter, Gunga Bai, was too young at first, and was never a match for this virago; and after a vain attempt to assert her rightful position as mistress of the house after her mother, she succumbed, and meekly agreed to play second fiddle. Her husband Narahari Rao was a quiet and sensible young man, and his very dependence on his father-in-law made him submit to Kamala Bai's rule. He was shy and retiring by nature, and was discreetly blind and deaf to much that he saw and heard in the house. He studiously avoided clashing with Kamala Bai and her doings, and she was therefore well-disposed towards him. The servants were one and all her willing and faithful accomplices,—in fact, only such were engaged and retained in service,—and they were ready to act as her spies,— all except Sarada, who was a stranger like her mistress. The servants generally spoke of the Dewan as the master and Kamala Bai as the mistress; Gunga Bai was the little mistress; and her husband, master son-in-law; there

was some confusion therefore on the advent of the new bride, but she was soon dubbed as the new mistress, a term that jarred sometimes on Kamala Bai's ears. Such was the household.

Fancy for yourself a large parlour adjoining the kitchen and facing the open court-yard in the middle of the house; a wooden swing, formed by a single plank of polished rosewood, six feet by three, was suspended by four bright brass chains from a beam in the ceiling, in the middle of the parlour. Kamala Bai, clad in a green embroidered silk, was seated one evening on the swing, with her legs down, singing in a low voice. A bunch of keys, suspended by a gold chain from her waist, was also swinging with her, and as it were, keeping tune to her song. Gunga Bai was sitting on a grass-mat near the edge of the parlour, combing and plaiting the hair of her step-mother, who was seated in front of her for the purpose.

"What unruly curls you have!" remarked Gunga Bai. "The moment I remove the comb, they curl themselves up again, and the hair is so thick too, and jet-black; I don't know how to comb down and plait together such ringlets, I am sure."

"Such curly hair, they say, indicates an unruly temperament," observed Kamala Bai. "I hope Clavirunda is not really unruly or obstinate, and that she will bring luck and happiness to the house and to my brother-in-law. "

"Did you not hear of it aunt?" said Gunga Bai. "It appears that my step-mother was quite against this marriage, and even wrote to the Maharaja and wept and prayed before him and the Maharani to stop it. "

"Did she really?" replied Kamala Bai in an incredulous tone. "That does not augur so well for my brother-in-law. It is true he is forty-seven years old; but then, he is a man, and what does age matter in men? It is we women who have to

be young and beautiful; but a man is a man at any age, and my brother-in law is one of the greatest in the kingdom, a lion among men. Why did she object, I wonder. What made you do so, Clavirunda?"

It was difficult to answer the question without giving offence, and the unwilling bride felt it.

"My grandfather had died only a month before," she replied after some hesitation, "and he was everything to me in this world, and I knew no other father or mother, brother or sister, or even playmate. I loved him so much and he died so suddenly, I was not even by his side then." Grief checked her speech, tears streamed from her eyes, and she could proceed no further.

"Why do you cry so, you silly one?" said Kamala Bai angrily. "It is not at all lucky for a new bride to cry like that. Do stop those tears, will you? The sight of those pearly little drops will madden my brother-in-law, I fancy, " she continued jocularly. "Surely, your grandfather, whatever else he was, was not immortal; and we must all die some day and make room for younger ones, I suppose."

"I loved him so much, "said Clavirunda, drying her tears and suppressing her grief with an effort, "and I did not wish to be married so soon after his death."

"And so it was against marriage that you protested and not against my poor brother-in-law in particular?" observed Kamala Bai. "There was some sense in that, of course. But you were so old and you looked quite a big woman already. How long did you think you could continue unwedded? Rumour said you had already come of age and I could well believe it too. Some of our relatives blame my brother-in-law for marrying such a girl, against our *Shastras*."

"Why did he marry me then?" asked Clavirunda innocently, "I would have remained in our house with my aunt until—until,—"

"Until when?" asked Kamala Bai with a laugh, "Until you became big with child, perhaps? Who ever heard of a Brahmin girl remaining unwedded so long, and who would wed such a girl but my infatuated brother-in-law?" and she laughed again mischievously.

"I am not such a girl, and I have been brought up and taught better than that," retorted Clavirunda, her spirit rising within her. "Brahmin women, remained unmarried to a much later age in days of yore, and some of them continued unwedded all their lives."

"So you too wished to remain unwedded all your life, did, you?" asked Kamala Bai with a mischievous twinkle in her eyes.

"I don't know, and I did not think of it at all;" replied Clavirunda. "At any rate," she added naively, "I should have waited for some one who would not have thought it doing me a favour to marry me."

"O I see now, that is what you wanted, some young man *to* your liking, a fair and fine-looking young athlete like our *Nandhi*, perhaps? " exclaimed Kamala Bai laughing aloud. "Here is a pretty piece of business indeed for my poor old brother-in-law! Who heard of a Brahmin girl talking in this manner, even in olden legend or story? It is all due to the wretched book-lore and conceited ideas which that stupid old man has foolishly put into her head."

"Don't abuse my venerable grand-father;" burst out Clavirunda, with irrepressible tears and rage. "He was the wisest man of his age, a veritable saint, and it is you ignorant, foul-mouthed women who are stupid and foolish. I will not allow my beloved Babaji to be vilified by such as you. I have heard of you and I know what you are and I will not allow you even to utter his name; you are not fit for it."

These burning words of grief and indignation were like bomb suddenly bursting in the midst of that family; Gunga

Bai let go the hair she was plaiting,—in fact Clavirunda had unconsciously pulled it away from her hands during the above speech—and leaned against the wall in mute amazement. Two servants who had heard the high and angry words, came out of the kitchen and stood there, equally astonished, with mouths half open. As for Kamala Bai, she had never received such a rebuke or heard such home-truths even from her late sister, and she too was at first dumbfounded and stunned by the suddenness and the directness of the attack, and she could not find her speech for some time.

"You have heard of me and you know me, do you, you silly impertinent, insignificant brat?" said she at last. "Very well, then; I intended otherwise for the sake of my brother-in-law, but now, you shall know me—what I am, and, what I am fit for." And these few words, almost stammered out in choking rage and mortification, sealed the doom of the new bride in that house.

CHAPTER II

THE SPIDER SETS THE TRAP

The Dewan was a coarse and sensual man, whom habitual indulgence in vice and the company of Kamala Bai had made quite insusceptible to all refinement and delicacy of feeling. His young wife could never forget his brutal advances which had greatly shocked the native purity and innocence of her mind, and increased the repugnance which she had felt for him even as a girl. The Dewan prided himself on being irresistible with women, and considered himself still in the prime of life. Kamala Bai well knew how to please or anger him by tickling or wounding his vanity on this point, and she began to play upon it the very day she proclaimed a vendetta against Clavirunda. She insinuated that Clavirunda

had and could have no love for him; she drew his attention artfully to anything in her conduct that lent itself to such an interpretation; she chafed him with allusive and sarcastic remarks on the utter failure of his boasted powers where they ought to have most easily succeeded; she enraged him further with mock condolences of solace; she sought to belittle Clavirunda's charms and beauty with faint praises and fastidious criticisms; she carried false but plausible tales against her and proved them behind her back with the help of Gunga Bai and the servants; and in fine, she did all she could to prejudice the simple and innocent girl with her unworthy husband, professing all along to act in the best of faiths and only for the correction and eventual good of the misguided and ill-nurtured orphan, whom she loved as her own daughter, and whom she so yearned to train up into an ideal Hindu wife for the sake of her beloved brother-in-law. Dissimulation is indeed a difficult art, and aversion, like love, when strongly felt, is hard to hide. Clavirunda's feelings towards her husband therefore naturally tinged all she did, and made Kamala Bai's task easy. At the latter's instigation, he soon began to chastise his wife and insult and scold her for real and fancied faults and misdemeanours; and she who could hardly bear his rude and lascivious caresses, could not but dread his approach when it was to slap or pinch her on her soft cheeks, or knock her on the head with his knuckles; and her life became miserable beyond her wildest fears. The servants in the house soon took their cue from their real mistress and began to neglect her orders and conveniences; even poor Sarada's loyalty and attachment to her pet Bayee were sorely put to test often, and she had to bear many a wanton insult and privation for her sake. The taunts and gibes of Kamala Bai were even harder to bear for the sensitive Clavirunda, and she soon learnt by experience that a patient and forbearing silence and submission, even under the worst provocation, helped her best in her sad plight. Nor did she

learn this lesson easily: for many were the sharp encounters she had with her rival, and sometimes even with her husband, and in all of them she fared worst in the end. But even her silence and submission had an air of noble martyrdom, of contempt, if not pity for her persecutors; and this galled Kamala Bai constantly, deprived her triumphs of half their pleasure and glory, and served to sustain her hatred and increase her thirst for revenge. Casting about therefore for surer and speedier means of reducing her enemy to complete subjection, she began to show impatience at her failure to present her husband with a son and heir, though more than two years had elapsed since the marriage.[86] She reminded her brother-in-law that she had given her own consent to his wedding the girl, solely because of her great wealth, and his having no son. The property had indeed come, but it was of no use,[87] and only served to enhance the regret, if there was to be no offspring of the union. She declared that the absence of issue was solely because of his wife's aversion for him, and advised him to marry another wife and beget a son before it too, late; but he did not take this bait.

In spite of her apparent success, two facts were borne in on her shrewd mind with increasing clearness, as time passed on,—that her brother-in-law still had a sensual affection for his wife, who was now grown into a supremely beautiful young woman, and hankered after her; and that the girl's noble forbearance and patience were beginning to soften his heart towards her, making him less and less willing to chastise her, or to be rude to her wantonly. This growing conviction alarmed her, and she soon pitched upon an ingenious plan[88] to ruin the poor girl more artfully and effectively.

With a woman's instinct, she soon found out that Madhava Rao, the Amatya's son, loved Clavirunda passionately in his heart, though perhaps he himself did not

yet know it well. She had not the least ground to doubt the girl's purity of mind, and she-had every reason to believe in it; yet she readily fancied, judging others by her own nature, that Clavirunda would gladly reciprocate the passion of such a handsome young gallant, if only she could do so secretly and safely. Her plan was to encourage and afford every facility for the manifestation and development of this illicit passion, and when it ripened sufficiently for her purpose, to bring her brother-in-law on the scene and thus ruin her rival. It was a diabolical plan, but Kamala Bai was a very vindictive woman; and fear, humiliation and malevolence goaded her on in her revenge.

Madhava Rao soon realised the utter hopelessness as well as the sinfulness of his passion, and strove to reason and crush it down. He rarely visited his uncle's house, lest the very sight of the object of his mad love should keep it alive and frustrate his efforts to erase it from his heart. As for Clavirunda Bai, she was wholly ignorant of the deep love she had inspired in her stepson's bosom, and knew nothing of the commotion and flutter a sight of her produced in it. Though she had no great affection for her wedded lord, she was a true Hindu wife, and she had never even dreamt of any disloyalty to him in thought, word, or deed. Further, the two families lived in adjacent houses in a truly fraternal state of mutual indifference and envy, and the door of communication between the two back-parlours was generally kept closed, except on any ceremonial occasions, when custom and public opinion required that they should mingle and mess together. But these obstacles to her plan were nothing to the clever and resourceful Kamala Bai.

She suddenly began to evince a kind compassion and fondness for the innocent orphan who was visibly unhappy. The attitude of the household changed immediately, and Clavirunda became the object of everybody's attention and solicitude. She could not account for this, but she was shrewd

enough to suspect that it boded no good. Remembering the classical simile that a bow bends but to destroy the enemy, she tried to be on her guard in her own innocent way, neither repelling the overtures of her rival, nor responding to them too freely. At the same time, Kamala Bai, as mistress of the Dewan's house, began to cultivate more friendly relations with his brother's family, and exchange of social amenities became frequent. The door between the two parlours was now kept open all day, and closed only when the families retired for the night. She sent Clavirunda to the next house often, on some pretext or other; no one could plait her beautiful and rebellious curls so well as the Amatya's daughter Ramani Bai; if some flowers or fruits or any cakes had to be sent, it was more courteous to send them through her than through a servant; she was often asked to fetch Ramani Bai's child for Kamala Bai to play with, and then she had to take it back each time. Clavirunda could not reasonably refuse to comply with such requests, which were made in the most suave and natural manner, and she suspected nothing; only, she felt there must be something dark and evil at the root of Kamala Bai's sudden kindness, and she could not guess it.

Meanwhile, young Madhava Rao's life was becoming more and more of a torture to him. He saw Clavirunda three or four times daily, and as she was his step-mother, etiquette did not require her to be shy in his presence, and she would talk with him freely. Kamala Bai often invited Madhava Rao, or *Nandhi* as she called him, to her house for a chat, and her own musical proclivities formed a ready excuse for this. They talked, that is, she talked about all sorts of topics, and Clavirunda Bai was also present on most of these occasions. Sometimes, in mock-earnestness, Kamala Bai dilated on the general injustice of young girls being wedded to elderly husbands fit to be their fathers and grandfathers and the unhappiness resulting from such unions; and then she would

naively wonder that many more of such girls did not seek for themselves suitable lovers to their own liking, on the sly. Sometimes she regretted that the Sanyasi did not wed Clavirunda to Madhava Rao, for what an ideal match it would have been! She professed the utmost scepticism in astrology and railed against it, instancing her own case in which the best astrologers had been consulted before the marriage and yet she was widowed in her teens. She extolled Clavirunda's good nature, learning, and unrivalled beauty to the young man, and thus inflamed his passion. Madhava Rao did not know what to do. The poison was too sweet, and he sometimes drank it with feverish eagerness; sometimes he fled from it. But on the whole, it was clear that he was not a match for Kamala Bai's wiles, and that his noble resolves were being fast undermined by her subtlety. During these delicious conversations, he was for the most part a mute and dreamy listener, but he began to gaze more and more lingeringly and longingly on Clavirunda's charms, and she caught his devouringly passionate eyes more than once, and they perturbed her mind with a vague, uneasy restlessness and fear. With instinctive modesty and good sense she said nothing, but she began to avoid his looks.

"Won't you please bring a tumbler of that orange sherbet for *Nandhi*?" said Kamala Bai one after-noon, when she was chatting with him in the parlour, seated on her favourite swing. The request was addressed to Clavirunda, who had gone away to the front parlour on his coming in, and was reading a Sanskrit book, by herself there. The sherbet was brought in by a servant after some minutes. "What are you doing there, Clavirunda?" called out Kamala Bai again, "Nandhi is going to tell me all about the elephant-fight in the palace yesterday, and I am sure you too would like to hear it."

"I am busy reading now, and I shall hear it from you afterwards," replied Clavirunda from her own place, and

went on, with her reading. She told Kamala Bai plainly that night that Madhava Rao stared at her in an unbecoming manner and that she did not like it, or his behaviour. But Kamala Bai made light of her suspicions, said that he was her son, and that she was far too squeamish and prudish.

"Not many girls have your rare beauty, my dear," continued she, "and it is no wonder that the young man finds it difficult to take his eyes away from your bewitching face. You must indeed be glad and proud of it."

"I don't feel so," replied Clavirunda drily, "and I think I should tell your brother-in-law of this."

"Don't be stupid," rejoined Kamala Bai, rather alarmed. "It will simply mean fresh trouble and misunderstanding between the two families, which are just now moving together more friendly than ever before. If you wish it, I shall warn the young man myself, and I am sure and will take my oath on it, he means nothing; but don't you act hastily and bring about trouble." This seemed reasonable, and Clavirunda agreed to keep quiet about it.

Kamala Bai had not been idle, in the meanwhile, but had been trying to poison the Dewan's mind with suspicion about his young wife. There was a low fence of plaited coconut-leaves between the two backyards, and she ordered it to be raised one day by three feet more. The Dewan saw the work being done asked her the reason. She replied that there was no privacy for the ladies in the backyard, and that she had noticed Madhava Rao coming frequently into the adjacent backyard of his house, especially when Clavirunda happened to go into theirs."

"What nonsense are you talking Kamala?" said the Dewan. "It must have been pure coincidence. Madhava is her son, you forget."

"I don't forget it" replied Kamala Bai quietly. "Only, I remember also that youth is youth, whatever may be the

kinship. We have the classical example of Sarangadhara[89] and his step-mother, and many another similar tale of passion and sin even now. Nandhi is the handsomest youth in this town; and your new wife, a veritable queen of beauty, though for my part I don't much fancy her piercing eyes. Not without good reason did the old Sanyasi wish to unite them together." The Dewan said nothing in reply and went away, but Kamala Bai knew that her shaft had hit, and she was therefore anxious that Clavirunda should not mar her work by any such complaint of her own, against Madhava Rao.

When Kamala Bai found that our heroine was deliberately avoiding the young man, she sought to make use of that fact in another way. She opened secret and confidential communications with him and spoke to him first in a kindly and guarded tone and gradually with more plainness, of his passion; she said she knew of it from the beginning, and that it was nothing unnatural for youth and beauty to be drawn to each other. She boldly assured him that Clavirunda too loved him deeply within her heart and that her strange conduct in avoiding him and her apparent embarrassment and constraint in his presence only proved the depth of her own love and her fear of being betrayed by it. She advised him to control himself, especially in her company, to have patience and to use caution. She besought him to consider how much the poor girl too suffered and had to dissemble and hide.

"She thinks I do not know anything," continued she calmly, "but her silly little heart is an open picture to me, I can see it tossed about and torn to shreds by her overwhelming passion. Such is the irony of fate. I sometimes feel most angry with the gods for permitting such mistakes in life. Astrology indeed! What good did ever come out of it and what good is there in it? Look at me: all the best astrologers unanimously promised me a long and happy married life, and I forget how many children; and here I am,

widowed in my eighteenth year. I can fully sympathise with such love as yours, and I pity you both, so young, so beautiful, so romantic, and so palpably made for each other. But be patient; trust in me and leave me to manage this for you. You see the trouble is this: she is a wedded wife and your step mother in the world's eyes, and she is a noble and high-souled girl; she feels that the passion is wrong and she is struggling within herself to crush it down; but it will not do, and the silly wench little knows its force and power. I assure you, her present attitude cannot last much longer. I think I see signs of the change already."

"I shall leave the town at once and go away to Bangalore or Sattara," exclaimed Madhava Rao unexpectedly. "I will not be the cause of her ruin; I feel it is a sin too, and I despise myself for it. But yet, the moment I see her, I seem to lose control over myself, and my eyes drink in her beauty and follow her about. I shall ask my father to get me transferred to some distant station. I am bound to help her noble struggle at least that way."

"There speaks the coward and the dreamer," retorted Kamala Bai. "You can no more get rid of such a passion at Benares or the snowy Himalayas than here. Sin indeed! God never could have meant that such a girl should marry a man like your uncle, and if the world would persist foolishly in making such unjust and impossible unions, why, it must take the consequences. Did your uncle expect a young beauty like Clavirunda to fall in love with him and dote on him, or even that she would prefer him to a young gallant like you? How then can such a passion, so natural and so inevitable, be a sin? and why should you run away from it, making yourself and her miserable for life? Where is there another girl like her? I shall be more plain with you and prove to you my sincerity; you know what the world says of me and your uncle. Well, perhaps, it is true; I have loved him ever since I came to live in this house when you were a chubby boy, just

learning to walk, and I love him still. Your uncle was a gay gallant then. He did not think of the sin of it, or of running away shamefully; and we have been so happy together. Shall I now sit idly by and see his heart stolen from me by this new wife of his? She does not love him at all, God knows, but he hankers after her more and more, and that is bitter to me. There is my secret, and you will now see I am not altogether unselfish in helping you both in your mutual passion. I swear to you, I shall bring you together very soon; only wait a little longer. I hope you will not doubt my sympathy and help hereafter."

Madhava Rao did not know what to say in reply to this. His nature loathed the woman before him, but alas! he was in the grip of an overwhelming passion, and his young, rebellious heart yearned for the sweets of 'unreflecting love,' and she alone could help him. He murmured his thanks and eternal gratitude, and promised to be patient and cautious and to be guided by her.

CHAPTER III

THE MADNESS OF PASSION

It was December, and the rains were pouring in torrents almost daily. Poor Gunga Bai was bed-ridden with asthma, worse than ever before. Her slender frame was pale and wasted, and not having been washed for some weeks, her skin was clammy and wrinkled and emitted a sickening smell; her hair had become matted, and had then been cropped close. Each fit of cough threatened to carry away her short and labouring breath, and a slow, incessant fever was sapping her vitality. The palace-physician was treating her; and her father, whose one redeeming feature was a deep and tender affection for his only child, never left her side, and nursed her day and night with the help of Kamala Bai

and his wife. As for Narahari Rao, the poor young man was often in tears by himself; but he rarely got an opportunity to talk to his wife, or be near her. It was not etiquette for a young man to nurse his sick wife, or tend her when there were older members of the family; and beyond having a look at her occasionally when he passed by, he had no means of expressing his sympathy and sorrow; nor did any one seem to remember that he was the one most affected by her illness and most concerned in its issue. The Dewan did not now attend his office or the palace, but Narahari Rao had to attend to his duties as usual.

It was about 10 P.M. Gunga Bai lay tossing with fever and panting for breath on a heap of soft cushions on her nuptial-cot in her room, which was reeking with the fumes of black datura leaves and ganja, and had its only door and both the windows shut close. A brass oil lamp was burning dimly in a corner. The Dewan was sitting on the edge of the cot and constantly replacing the woollen blanket which the invalid deranged in the restlessness of her fever; his wife stood at the head of the cot, burning some drugs on a censer and Kamala Bai was seated on the opposite edge of the cot. The physician had just left for his supper promising to return soon, as the fever was high and tending towards a crisis.

"Go, my brother-in-law, go and eat something and come back. I shall look after Gunga during your absence. It is late, and your supper will get quite cold in this wretched weather," said Kamala Bai coaxingly.

"I don't feel hungry now; I shall go later, or a cup of milk will do for me," replied the Dewan in a hollow voice, fondly caressing the patient's wasted hand which lay on his lap.

"Of what avail will it be to her if you starve like this?" pleaded Kamala Bai earnestly! "You will also fall ill, and then you will not be able even to sit by her side in this

manner. God knows, I will gladly give every drop of blood in my body to save her, but of what use is it? It is her fate to suffer and ours to look on helplessly. How many thousands of girls have scarcely enough to eat or to wear in this weather, and yet they are quite healthy and strong, while this poor little darling, who is our sole hope and solace, suffers like this. It is God's will, and what can we do for it? Do go in and eat something, atleast for form's sake. It is getting very late." The patient also feebly waved her hand towards him, and closed her sunken eyes, as if she would rest and slumber a little in the meanwhile; in fact, her faint senses were being overpowered by the fumes of the narcotics. The Dewan waited a few minutes longer, and then cautioning Kamala Bai and his wife to keep still and not disturb the patient, he quietly went out of the chamber walking on tip-toe and gently closing the door after him. A few minutes later, the door was opened suddenly, and Madhava Rao entered. He wore a silk-bordered cloth and a rose-coloured woollen jacket and night-cap; a spotted silk muffler was wound round his neck, its fringed and embroidered ends hanging on his breast like a garland. Kamala Bai at once-made signs to him not to speak loud, and he sat down on a stool by the side of the cot and turned his gaze towards Clavirunda. Seeing his eyes were on her, she gently set down the censer by the side of the bed, and walked out of the room closing the door after her.

When the Dewan saw his wife enter the room where he was saying his evening prayers before supper, he asked her whether Gunga was asleep; and she replied in the affirmative, and began to set his supper for him. When he was taking his last course, of rice and milk, he suddenly remarked: "There! I think I hear a low cough; run up and see whether she has another fit already and I shall follow you presently."

Clavirunda too heard a slight noise from the direction of the sick-chamber and ran towards it in haste. On reaching,

however, the passage leading to the room, she ran almost into the arms of Madhava Rao who was just coming out of it and whose opening and closing its door carelessly had occasioned the noise. She at once moved to a side and stood abashed, looking on the ground. There was an awkward pause for some seconds, and Madhava Rao was the first to break the silence: "I am going away to Pattukota," said he, and paused.

"So I heard," she answered faintly.

"I am going away immediately; the carriage is waiting and I came to take leave of you all."

She said nothing in reply.

"I may not come back for many months, perhaps for some years," he continued, with quickening breath. "Will you remember me?"

"Remember you!" said she flushing; and slightly raising her eyes towards him for the first time now, she asked, "What do you mean?"

"What do I mean! Do you not love me then, or even pity me? My God! Is this my fate?"

"Yes, I love you as a mother, as a sister."

"As a mother! As a sister!" he repeated her words mechanically, and paused again for a few moments: and then, he caught her suddenly in his arms and strained her to his breast in a wild embrace and kissed her passionately and repeatedly on her pale, quivering lips. He then almost dropped her down, and opening the front door of the house, rushed out and was gone, even before she could fully realise what had happened. She was now trembling with fear and shame and panting for breath. Her eyes brimmed with tears, her heart beat violently, and her hand mechanically wiped the lips on which the burning kisses had been imprinted, for the fragrance and the red tinge of the betel he had been

chewing were still there.

"Why, what are you doing here and why are you like this?" sternly demanded her husband, who entered immediately after the incident, and saw her excitement; but she could not reply at once.

"I heard the street-door open and saw some one passing out," he continued, "was it Madhava?"

"Yes," she said in a whisper, and almost mechanically.

"What were you both doing here and why are you trembling like this?" he demanded in an angry tone.

"He was rude to me; he insulted me;" she ejaculated in reply, her eyes streaming with tears.

"What did he say? What did he do?"

"He said he was going away and came to take leave; and then he caught hold of me forcibly and kissed me. I shall kill myself."

"O, I see! I have spoiled a pretty lovers' rendezvous," he exclaimed in a bitter mocking tone. "No doubt you found his kisses very sweet, though you shed crocodile tears now, having, been caught in the game. I see!" And saying these cruel words, He went out into the street, and saw a carriage being driven away swiftly at its southern end and heard the tinkling bells of the bulls. His brother, the Amatya, and some others of his family, were standing in front of their house. The Dewan called to his brother, who at once came in, saying: "How is Gunga now? The physician said she was not better, and this wretched weather shows no signs of clearing up. I am afraid Madhava will get caught in the rain to-night."

"Is it his carriage that is going?"

"Yes; did he not take leave of you all? He went over there for the purpose just now."

"He did not take leave of me, but he has taken away

my honour from me instead."

"Why, brother, what do you mean?"

"He tried to ravish my wife, his step-mother as a-parting compliment. He caught hold of her and kissed her, it seems; and I don't know what else he would have done, had I not come upon them suddenly," said the Dewan bitterly.

"You don't say so; it cannot be true!" said the Amatya.

"It is only too true; I saw it myself;" replied the Dewan. "I told you to send him away as soon as I smelt that all was not right, and the Maharaja too agreed to it and posted him to Pattukota. But you delayed his going all these days on some pretext or other, and this is the result. That young man will be the disgrace and ruin of the family."

"I never thought he would behave so; I can scarcely believe it even now. Well, he is gone and won't be back for many months, not till his wife comes of age."

"I saw it myself with my own eyes, I tell you; and there stands my wife, weeping bitterly and saying that she would kill herself, rather than survive such an insult. And this to his step mother! *Kali* is fast ripening and the end of the world cannot be far off."

CHAPTER IV

THE JEALOUS HUSBAND

Gunga Bai did not rise again from that bed of agony. Her poor, bereaved husband, after dissolving her ashes in the river the day after her cremation, returned not to his father-in-law's house, where he had spent the most happy, though not the most honourable days of his life. But the Dewan was utterly prostrated with grief, and it taxed all the artfulness and coaxing of Kamala Bai to persuade him to take a little nourishment even once daily. It seemed as if he wished to

starve himself to death, unable to bear his grief. None of his numerous relatives who came to condole with him, nor his brother, had any influence with him. His wife, he seemed to detest particularly, and even her presence irritated him. Kamala Bai was the only person he tolerated, and she tried to console him and to nourish him and keep up his health which was rapidly declining. Clavirunda appealed to Kamala Bai to intercede for her and protested her innocence vehemently, pointing out that she was partly the cause of her husband's foul suspicion, as such a thing could not have happened if she had, as she had at first wished to, informed him of Madhava Rao's objectionable behaviour of her own accord. Kamala Bai advised her to be patient, attributing his conduct to grief and low spirits, and promised to set everything right as soon as he grew better. But there is no grief so keen, or calamity so dire that Time, the mighty magician, cannot lighten and heal and the Dewan gradually rallied and talked more of destiny and the inscrutable will of Providence. He did not indeed resume his usual avocations, but he moved about freely within his house and instructed his brother about his official duties and private affairs. Towards his wife, however, he showed no change. Her very sight enraged him, and he forbade her to ever appear before him. This order would have been even welcome to her in the early days of her married life; but now, when her husband was stricken with sorrow which it was her right to share and to console, to be thus tabooed because of a baseless and foul suspicion of her honour, was more than she could bear, and she entreated Kamala Bai again and again to testify to her innocence and restore her husband's faith in her honour.

A few words are here necessary to explain Kamala Bai's conduct at this juncture. Soon after Clavirunda left the sick-chamber, there was a hasty consultation between Kamala Bai and Madhava Rao, in whispers and gestures, and she told

him to return to his house at once and come again after half-an-hour when his uncle would be with the patient and Clavirunda would be taking her supper; he could then easily find occasion to bid her a long and affectionate farewell and pledge their mutual love before he left. Kamala Bai shrewdly divined that Madhava Rao's transfer to Pattukota was the fruit of the seed of jealousy she had sown in her brother-in-law's mind, though she had not expected or desired such a result. Slowly and secretly she was trying to poison his mind by finding excuses for Madhava Rao and throwing all the blame on his wife. By advising Madhava Rao to take leave of Clavirunda secretly within the house, she expected to bring about the long-desired crisis, which Gunga Bai's sudden illness and the confusion and distress into which it had thrown the household had made it impossible for her to accomplish earlier. She felt that unless something was effected before the young man left Tanjore, her revenge would have to hang fire indefinitely. And the unexpected occurrence in the passage, she therefore welcomed gladly as god-send, and she now boldly urged her accusation against Clavirunda to her husband behind her back, defending Madhava as an impressionable and simple young man, who, even because he was a man, was far less to blame than his wily temptress. She blackened her fair character as much as possible, recalling to mind distorted versions of old and half-forgotten incidents; and she professed to be shocked at her wanton and shameless lechery which could think of nothing but her incestuous passion even in the very presence of Death. To Clavirunda, when alone with her, she was all sympathy and kindness, advising her to be patient, and promising her intercession and help at the proper time.

And what did the Dewan think of it all? He was indeed blinded by jealousy and prejudiced against his wife by the never-ending curtain-lectures of Kamala Bai. But the palpable astonishment, indignation and grief in which he had found

his wife immediately after the incident, and the ring of utter sincerity and truth in every one of her words, had sunk deep within his mind, and he half believed in her innocence. But she had been embraced and kissed by another man, and that fact so inflamed his anger and jealousy that he could not perceive her blamelessness for it, nor that such an accident or even worse might happen to the purest woman on earth. This sensual, shameless, vain, heartless old debauchee, who had been every day and under the very nose of his wedded wife, indulging in open dalliance with the coarser and more shameless wanton of a widow, his first wife's own sister, could not bear to think that another man had forcibly kissed his wife, and he needs must put aside such a polluted woman, abhor her very sight, and treat her with insulting cruelty, while he himself still continued to indulge in his sinful liaison with that widow, treating her as his own wedded wife.

A self-respecting woman who loves her husband, naturally regards his unfaithfulness as the worst humiliation he could put her to, and should he further insult her with foul suspicion of her honour and maltreat her cruelly through jealousy, based on but his own corrupt mind and morals, it must indeed be past bearing. Our heroine's life in those days was one long dirge of misery, punctuated with insults and vile abuses, and having for its refrain the black and utterly false accusation against her honour, with never a note of hope, or cheerful word; and more than once, in the lonely bitterness and despondency of her heart, she thought of putting an end to her painful existence.

After the death of his first wife, and when it was thought he would not remarry, the Dewan was urged to adopt one of his brother's sons, to perform his funeral and inherit his estate; but expecting Gunga Bai to present him with a grandson, he did not yield. Now that she had died childless and there was no prospect of a son being born to

him by his second wife, the future of his soul again began to worry his mind. There is perhaps no aspect of popular Hinduism more curious than the importance it attaches to the funeral rites of a deceased person.[90] It would seem that this life of ours is comparatively less precious and significant than the post-mortem one. A Hindu may be a liar, drunkard, forger, rake, in fact, an hourly breaker of all moral laws and a vile disgrace to humanity; and if he pretends to conform to a few rules of his caste, he is let alone by his brethren and he himself does not think seriously of his vices. But he must have a son, or adopt one, to propitiate his manes with sesame and water; and once this is assured, he is not afraid to march with his dreadful knapsack of sins into the dark valley of Death. Of course, he believes in Karma; but then it would be time to think of the retribution for these pleasant vices and gratifying triumphs over our enemies, when that unknown re-birth comes about and the accounts of these over-drafts and notes-of-hand are cast and settled, and the bills fall due, and the decree holders demand payment; sufficient unto this life, thinks he, are the cares and troubles thereof. The faith in countless re-incarnations and lives seems to directly encourage moral laxity and to weaken the will in its struggle against the temptations of immediate pleasure or gratification, while the possibility of eventual salvation, serves to justify such moral inertia and backsliding, depriving life of the necessity for unceasing struggle and effort. Given a practically endless series of lives and blissful salvation at the end, but few souls are ambitious of speedy liberation, and earnestly and painfully climb upwards with the eyes steadily fixed upon the goal; while the lazy and the pleasure-loving millions jog on leisurely, with many a side-excursion in pursuit of what looks pleasant, or to gratify a whim, or vanity; laughing or weeping, hating or loving, indulging in quarrels and jealousies, great and small; ever partial to everything that holds out present pleasure or profit; and

above all, utterly regardless of time and the absence of steady, speedy progress. They fritter away and play with their lives thoughtlessly or deliberately; and so the philosophy of Re-incarnation and *Karma*, as popularly understood and practised, does not appear to be without its drawbacks. But running through it all, is this general faith in the efficacy of funeral rites properly performed, irrespective of the nature and value of the life actually lived. Even the anglicised Hindu of to-day, who feels no scruples of caste and has virtually abandoned most of his ancestral beliefs and practices, is squeamish about the due performance of the annual sraddha and other ceremonies; and many an unworthy son who starved and otherwise ill-treated his parents during their lifetime, spends lavishly on their funeral obsequies, and annually fills to gorging with all sorts of dainties and delicacies obtained with great trouble and expense, the Brahmins who corporeally represent his manes for the time being, himself forgoing his usual comforts and starving till late in the afternoon, in front of the sacred fire which fills his eyes with volumes of smoke. Such is one of our common beliefs.

The question of adopting a son and heir therefore was again mooted, and the Amatya pressed his brother to adopt his son Narayana, a boy of seven years who had not yet been invested with the sacred thread. The Amatya's next male child was only two years old, and so it was all the more advisable for the Dewan to adopt young Narayana at once and perform his thread-ceremony, as prescribed by the rules regulating such adoptions.

"I am thinking of celebrating Narayana's thread-ceremony this month", said the Amatya one day, when the Dewan was speaking to him in the upper-storey of his house. "So I should like to know your mind definitely."

The Dewan made no reply.

"I have no objection even to a tentative adoption:" continued he. "If a son is born to you, my son will return to my house and claim no share in your property."

"That is impossible hereafter," replied the Dewan rather testily, "I have washed my hands of that woman and shall have nothing to do with her."

The shade of a faint smile flittered over the Amatya's crafty countenance at this declaration; but he suppressed it at once and naively inquired: "May I take it as settled then that you will adopt Naryana and invest him with the thread yourself?"

"My sister-in-law urges me to adopt a boy of her family," replied the Dewan, "but wait; don't interrupt; I have myself told her that it is impossible. I shall, of course, provide for her liberally—but as to bringing in a stranger to inherit the family property, I shall no more do it than I would have allowed you to commit such an atrocity, if you were in my position and I in yours."

"I am glad to hear it," said the Amatya in a tone of relief; "I too heard that Kamala Bai was giving out that her cousin's son was to be adopted by you; but I could not believe even for a moment that you would prefer a stranger to your own brother's children. We were all hoping that poor Gunga would recover and present you with a grandchild, but cruel fate has ordained otherwise. What does my sister-in-law think of this adoption? Her consent is necessary, as there is also her own *Stridhana* property, which is very considerable."

"No one has yet asked her about it," replied the Dewan, "but I am sure she will not dare to cross my wishes in the matter; if she does so, I shall drive her out of the house, the impudent wench. By the way, the Maharaja has not given any definite answer about Uppur, left with him for founding charities; I ought to do that now and be the trustee. Did you

remind him about this recently? Did he say anything?"

"I think the matter is best left alone for the present," replied the Amatya. "Till the Pundit Rao's death, the Maharaja was proposing to invest the accumulated income alone of the two villages in charities, restoring both the villages to your wife as her property, and the Pundit Rao too approved of it. The accumulated income is enormous, according to the accounts kept by me, and quite enough to found and endow a *patasala* for a hundred students and a *chuttram*, and also for sinking fresh-water wells at suitable intervals along the route to Rameswaram; these being the charities specially desired by the old man. But now he seems even to regret that he handed over Malayur to you during the marriage, and it is best not to rake up the matter about Uppur just yet. I am keeping a strict account, and we shall have to wait for a more auspicious occasion to renew the claim".

"But I have a clear right in my wife's behalf and the Maharaja can never deny that or refuse me justice," said the loving husband of Clavirunda Bai, nobly advocating her cause.

"He will not deny it," replied the Amatya ; "and as for doing you justice in hard cash, you know him, brother, even longer than I do; he will pay when he can, and that will not be in our time, I fear."

The reader would not have failed to note that the man who thus sought to increase his riches was childless, very affluent already, and so old and sickly[91] that he did not expect to live long; nor had he any philanthropic motive in thus hankering after more of worldly possessions; yet, so eager and strong was his greed, that though he had practically abandoned his wife and would allow her no voice in the adoption of an heir, whom he wished to inherit not only his, but also her own personal property, he was not ashamed to

pose as her champion and rightful guardian before his king, and to claim rights and privileges as her husband. This is not however an unusual phase of human nature, when it has contracted the vice of aimless hoarding and land-grabbing.

"Anyhow, it is better, even for the sake of formality to consult my sister-in-law about the adoption," said the Amatya after awhile. "Will you do it yourself, or shall I ask my wife to speak to her? Kamala Bai will not do for the purpose, and will try only to cause mischief."

"It is not at all necessary, and I won't ask her about it," replied the Dewan loftily, "and as you say, my sister-in-law will not do. You may ask your wife to speak to her, if you like, but it is unnecessary. In fact, she does not know anything of her *stridhanam* property, or how the matter stands now."

CHAPTER V

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND

Three days after the above conversation, while the Dewan was engaged in his room poring over some papers and accounts, his wife entered timidly, and begged to say a few words to him; but he angrily drove her out of the chamber with a stern rebuke. She came again after an hour, and placing a letter before him, left the room silently. The Dewan curiously opened and read the letter, which was in chaste and elegant Marathi, written in a clear, bold hand, and may be translated as follows:—

"With humble salutations to the lotus feet of my honoured lord and husband, I, Clavirunda, crave leave to commend these few lines to his kind notice:

I am forced to trouble him in this manner, because it has pleased him to deny his faithful wife a personal hearing,

and the matter requires that he should know what I think of it. My honoured sister-in-law of the next house informed me two days ago of my lord's intention to adopt her son Narayana as his son and heir, and she wished me to agree to it, and also to his inheriting my *Stridhana* property, in the event of no child being born to me. I will never consent to adopt and treat as my son and heir, a brother of the man who insulted me so vilely and has caused my lord's present estrangement from me. As for my *Stridhana* property, I learn that it consists, besides a house and two villas, of a rich village which has been in my lord's enjoyment since my marriage, and another which is now with the Maharaja, and which my saintly and venerable grandfather intended for founding certain charities. I entreat my lord to move the Maharaja in my behalf to carry out early my beloved grandsire's wishes in the matter of the charities; and should the Maharaja be at present too busy to attend to it, I earnestly request my lord to kindly take that trouble upon himself, and thus help me to discharge his pious duty to the sacred memory of the departed. When this has been done, I should care little about my own property, and my lord will be at liberty to dispose of it as may please him, though I am yet in my teens, and it appears somewhat incongruous and premature for me to think of an adoption. Her husband's love is more precious than the three worlds to a true *pativrata*, as my learned and honoured lord is no doubt aware: and when that supreme blessing is denied, what else is there for his humble slave to care for in this world? Should there be any difficulty however, about the village now in the Maharaja's enjoyment, I wish to found the charities with my own *stridhana* property: and my lord who has already untold riches of his, will not, I hope, object to it but will gladly help me in the matter, especially as he has no child to inherit what is his own already, and so cannot seek or wish to deprive me of the means of discharging a sacred duty. With

sincerest protestations of my innocence and loyalty by all that is holy and dear to me, and with humble salutations to my lord's lotus feet—Clavirunda."[92]

The Dewan read and re-read the epistle, and could not but admire it for the style, the sentiments expressed, and the manner in which they were conveyed. Few even of the worst men in this world are so dead to all that is truthful, noble, and righteous that they cannot appreciate striking instances of those virtues, when they happen to cross their dreary and darksome paths. Few men indeed love vice and evil for their own sake. In fact, the most emphatic and eloquent praises of the major virtues have been from those who least practised them; and the Dewan, callous old sinner though he was, was deeply touched by the noble words of his young wife, and a vague sense of remorse and awe entered his mind. But just then, his evil genius also entered the chamber in the person of Kamala Bai, whose short, rotund, and generously-cast figure was trembling all over with rage and excitement.

"Either of us must quit this house this moment," exclaimed she, stammering and stuttering with passion. "I have borne with her long for your sake, but I cannot bear to be abused so to my very face by this impudent little brat of yesterday. Send me away this instant. I have been amply rewarded for all these years of faithful slavery in this house, and you may live happily with that fine, educated wife of yours, and help her to write letters to her paramours, the shameless wanton!"

The Dewan winced under the last epithet applied to his wife, the noble girl whose letter he was still holding in his hand; but it was all his own doing, and he was quite helpless and weak in the presence of this masterful shrew, and could only despise himself for it.

"Why, what has happened, Kamala; tell me what has happened now?" he asked wearily and meekly.

"Happened indeed!" exclaimed the angry woman. "I could not find her at all for some time in the house, and began to fear that, as usual, she had gone to the backyard to ogle at some one else, now that her lover is far away. Cook Kalyani then told me that she saw her go into the unfortunate Gunga's room with writing materials; so when I saw her after a while, I asked her to whom she had been writing letters and she curtly said, 'To no one in particular.' I then asked her point-blank whether it was to her absent lover. And what reply do you think the impudent wench gave me? 'I am a married woman and a wife faithful to my wedlock I am not a widow and I have no lovers to write to secretly,' and this to my face. I put up with this insult, pretending not to notice it, and again demanded to know whom she had been writing to, if not to her lover; and would you believe it, she grew angry at this, and without so much as stopping or looking at me to answer my question, she went away to the backyard, murmuring audibly that she was not writing to her lover, for she had none, but to mine; and even the servants must have heard it, for they giggled and laughed among themselves in the kitchen. I have borne much, but I cannot stay for a moment longer under the same roof with her."

Somehow, the Dewan was not in the mood to get angry with his wife, or to sympathise with his sister-in-law: and the humour of the whole thing was so plain and infectious. He felt, that his wife was not to blame at all. "She told you only the bare truth," he replied with mock-seriousness. "She was then writing this letter to me; and am I not your lover?"

"O, you too insult me, and this is what I get for my pains and life-long devotion to you!" she exclaimed, and then bursting into tears, she began to sob and upbraid him for his cruel ingratitude. A Sanskrit proverb says that a child's strength lies in its tears, and an illiterate woman is very much like a child in many respects. The Dewan felt his moral impotence before her, despised himself for having fettered

his feet in such ignominious shackles, and regretted the day she first stepped into his house. This was, however, only a passing feeling, the effect of his wife's letter; and soon the weeping and wailing woman's taunts and accusations of ingratitude and her reminding him of the great happiness as well as calamities she had shared with him, wrung his heart, and his lower nature resumed its habitual sway over his depraved mind. He could not bear to see her tears, and he was struck with remorse for his wanton, cruel reply. He caressed and consoled her, vowed his eternal gratitude and devotion, recalled to memory how he owed his very life to her affectionate and careful nursing during the illness following Gunga Bai's death, gratefully acknowledged all his indebtedness to her ever since she came to bless his dwelling, and promised to punish the impertinence of his wife and to bring home to her suitably her subordinate and dependent position in the house. With much trouble and coaxing, he appeased her wrath and obtained his own forgiveness. Then her feminine curiosity was aroused, and she wanted to know what the girl had written. He read the letter to her, and even she could not but admire it at first; but she soon remembered her own interests and the game she had to play, and she condemned severely the audacity of a little girl who professed to be wiser than her own husband, and such a man too as the whole world deemed fit to become the Pradhan of the kingdom. She characterised her objections to the adoption as deep cunning and hypocrisy in order to hoodwink him into a belief in her innocence; and she pressed him to adopt her own cousin's son. "I have sacrificed my honour for you and spent the best days of my life here in this house, seeking to further your welfare and happiness;" said she earnestly. "I was all along hoping that a son would be born to luckless Gunga and my position in the house thus secured, that I would not have to face dishonour and poverty in my old age; but the fates ordered otherwise. After all, my brother-

in-law, you are mortal, and your health has been anything but good since her death. God alone knows how anxious I have been on your account, and how many sleepless nights I have spent in tears, praying for your recovery. Should you adopt your brother's child, and then anything happens to you suddenly, just imagine what would become of me. Your brother would drive me into the street even before the corpse is removed, and his son, who hates me like poison for crossing him in his love, would behave even worse. I shall have nothing but shame and starvation staring me in my face. I therefore implore you if you have the least consideration or pity for me, if your promises and vows were true, and not mere lies to deceive a simple and credulous woman, adopt my cousin's son. Your brother is even richer than yourself and has enough to spare for all his children. It is only greed that makes him covet your property too."

"Don't be foolish, Kamala, and don't talk so glibly of my sudden death and my corpse and all that," replied the Dewan impatiently. "It makes my flesh creep so. And you know it is all moonshine, your having to face poverty and starvation: I have two thousand rupees of your money and the interest on the amount till now; and I shall double, or even treble it if you like. I know how much of my life's happiness and comfort I owe to you, and I am not an ungrateful wretch. Nor am I unaware, as you perhaps believe, that you have nearly seven thousand rupees secretly invested with some of your relatives; there, don't look alarmed and don't tell me lies; I don't grudge it and won't touch a pie of it; and I will not even mention it again, if it alarms you so much. Surely, all these put together must be more than ample for a single soul, even if the worst should happen to me and my brother turn you out. I have not yet made up my mind about the adoption, and this letter here of her independent and learned ladyship, gives me pause; and I am afraid I have been counting without the host. But do be reasonable, and

consider what the world would think and say of me if I leave my property, mostly ancestral, to any but my own brother's children. There, be a good wench, for I really need your help to persuade this impudent wife of mine, so that her *Stridhana* properly may not slip by."

"Did I for a moment consider what the world would think and say of me, when you wanted me to sacrifice my honour, more precious to a woman than even her life, for your own pleasure?" retorted Kamala Bai sharply. "Far from helping you, I shall do my best to confirm her in her present decision, which, shows more good sense than I ever credited her with. In this, we are both interested friends and not rivals." And she left the room in rage and mortification,

CHAPTER VI

PLAYING WITH FIRE

When Clavirunda first noticed Madhava's strange behaviour towards her, it frightened her and made her uneasy. She had read of the passion of love in books, but never felt it herself. Her husband's vulgar rudeness and her girlish aversion for him prejudiced her against the sexual instinct, and she felt only humiliation in her wifehood.[93] Madhava's wistful looks first stirred in her heart a vague excitement, which she had not felt till then and could not well define to herself. Then came Kamala Bai's insinuations, and frequent discourses on the philosophy of love and the unnaturalness of disproportionate unions. Though the dominant feeling was one of fear and alarm, these frequent references to the all-powerful passion, her own efforts to avoid the youth, and his yearning and sorrowful looks surcharged with the very agony of his hopeless love which she sometimes came across suddenly, continued to work unconsciously within her mind, and disposed her to pity his unhappiness. She heard from

Kamala Bai that her grand-father had first intended her for Madhava Rao, and a comparison of her present fate with what it would then have been, was inevitable. Acting on Kamala Bai's plausible advice, she did not speak to her husband about this nephew's objectionable behaviour at first; and latterly, her own mind dissuaded her from it; it was unnecessary, it would be cruel on the unhappy youth; she could herself easily guard against any mischief coming out of it. Perhaps there was also a vague subconscious sense of guilt, or moral pollution, born of the irresistible regret at what might have been, somewhere deep within her mind, and she could not speak to her husband on the subject with an unclouded brow and an innocent conscience. She knew nothing of Kamala Bai's secret machinations, and as her husband never referred to the subject, she suspected nothing. When therefore she heard for the first time that Madhava Rao would leave Tanjore soon, she received the news with a feeling of relief, not unmingled with regret. Good and evil are inextricably mixed up in our nature. Whatever her feelings, she had never dreamt even for a moment of being unfaithful to her wedlock, and she was on the whole glad, even for Madhava's own sake. He had been recently wedded to a rich girl, and she thought that he would soon forget his love for her while abroad, and when he returned home after one or two years, his wife would come to live with him and all would be well. This wholesome thought, however, had an under-current of a different nature, of regret at the cessation of the love she had inspired; of a willing and eager doubt whether he would ever love his wedded wife, who was more rich than fair, as passionately as he seemed to love herself; of a wild and overwhelming pity for herself and for him, at what might have been but for astrology. Such were her feelings on first learning the news, thoughts and ruminations rather dangerous to her moral purity and peace of mind, but inevitable and irresistible.

The sudden illness of Gunga Bai diverted her mind, and I filled it with other thoughts and cares. And then came suddenly, as a veritable thunder-bolt, that little incident of a few seconds in the passage adjoining the sick-chamber, in the very presence of Death, as Kamala Bai rightly described it. Clavirunda had not heard that Madhava was going away that night, and she had almost forgotten him. There was no time to collect her thoughts, and she could not even definitely remember what answer she gave him. But that stifling embrace and those passionate, burning kisses, she could never forget them. The physical pollution, the outrage to her modesty, was the first feeling, and she expressed it to her husband on his questioning her immediately after the incident. But thinking of it all over and over in her mind afterwards, as she could not help doing, she felt that she had scarcely realised before the full strength and fervour of Madhava's passion. It was something stupendous, superhuman almost. He would not otherwise have so forgotten himself; nay, her eyes were on him when he rushed towards her and strained her to his breast, and she saw from the wild frenzy in his eyes, that he was forced to it by some thing beyond himself. It was the mad recklessness of despair, impelled by the very agony of his hopeless passion. He seemed like one possessed, to be quite oblivious that she was not merely another man's wife but stood in the relationship of a mother to him. His mother? Why, she was yet in her teens, and he just out of them, and she his mother! How could her being wedded to an old man, who happened to be his father's brother, alter nature and make him her son? And then, sometimes, his spare athletic figure, his refined manly features, the deep co-mingling of passion, sorrow, and romance which was the habitual expression of his large, dreamy eyes in her presence, his gay dress and gallant demeanour, would come before her mental vision, and she would fondly and lingeringly gaze on them in a

reverie of subliminal bliss "in which thought was not," and dream of what might have been. Thus it happened that, while a sense of danger and fear was uppermost in her mind as long as Madhava was living next-door and her feeling for him never went far beyond pity and regret, now that he was gone, the pity and regret soon ripened into something far more dangerous and demoralizing, though there was still the consciousness that it was morally wrong, and though she inwardly struggled to stem the course of her wild thoughts and fancies. But such thoughts and fancies imperceptibly became the pleasant and familiar part of her solitude when the monitor within was depressed or asleep, or when her husband's estrangement and cruelty vexed her mind. She saw clearly, however, that the adoption of Narayana meant the gradual reunion of the two families, and it frightened her to think of how it would affect her on Madhava's return. There would be a grim struggle then, and she feared to face it as her own mind anticipated, or was it wished for, her shameful defeat. This was her first objection to the adoption. She was also piqued at her husband's never having consulted her about it, though he wished the adopted heir to inherit her own *Stridhana* property too; others had spoken to her at his instigation, but not he. She also feared, and this was suggested by Kamala Bai, that once she consented to the adoption and Narayana succeeding to her estate, neither her husband nor the Amatya would help her to carry out her grandfather's wishes, that they would on the other hand try to get the other village too for themselves. The Sanyasi had left behind no written instructions to her knowledge, and all that she could learn on enquiry through her servant Sarada was, that he had asked the Maharaja to invest Uppur in charities, intending Malayur as her dowry. Both her husband and his brother had admitted this, but they might change any time they saw a chance of securing both the villages to themselves in her name. The King himself was said to be

unwilling, or unable to give up Uppur at once, and if he stuck to it, she wished to found the charities with Malayur, which her husband was enjoying since her marriage. And so she refused to agree to the adoption for more than one reason, and some months passed away in this manner. Narayana growing up without the holy thread, and his mother frequently pestering her consent, at the instigation of her husband.

CHAPTER VII

THE SCHEMING BROTHERS

"You may assure the Maharaja that he need not be anxious, and that no war can break out now, even if we are ready and wish for it," said the Dewan to his brother one afternoon. The Nawab, in whose territory the Melur dam[94] lay, would neither repair it himself, nor allow the King of Tanjore to do it; and so the Tanjore delta was threatened with drought and its rich fertility endangered. Mediation had failed, and a war, which Tanjore could ill afford, seemed necessary. Pratap Singh wished to consult his astrologer Dewan before deciding finally, and as the latter was very ill and bed-ridden, he deputed his Amatya to consult his brother and report the result to him. "The matter will be settled amicably," said he, "by the intervention of a mutual friend, presumably the English; and it is lucky we have here now, the same Englishman who has more than once saved us; he relieved us when that mad Frenchman besieged the town, and again it was he who successfully negotiated for us two years ago, when the Nawab wanted to pick a quarrel over the tribute. Tell the Maharaja to send him to the Nawab."

"The treasury is nearly empty and even the regular troops have not been paid for two months. I don't see how we can go to war now," said the Amatya.

"There is no fear;" replied the Dewan. "The stars will not allow it, and you may assure the Maharaja accordingly from me. Did you speak to him recently about Uppur?"

"Even this morning, I hinted about it." replied the Amatya, "and the Maharaja only said that the matter lay on his conscience, and he felt he was ungrateful to the memory of his guru in thus neglecting his injunction. But I would advise no more reference to it now, or even in the present Maharaja's life-time. He said something to-day of naming the Vennar *chuttram* after the late Pundit Rao; and then, he would probably sick to Uppur with a clear conscience. The palace-physician told me that the Maharaja's malady was rapidly getting worse and that he could not live for many more years. So I think it best to wait, and then we may easily get the village from his son Tulsaji, who knows nothing about the affair."[95]

"As for that, I may tell you, between ourselves, that the Maharaja will not live for many weeks longer, leave alone years," replied the Dewan. "I was looking at his horoscope this morning about this war, and I found that he had to pass through a grave crisis within the next twenty-five days; ten to one, he will not survive it. But I am afraid, my brother, that my days too are numbered, and I too may not survive the 28th of next month, when two planets combine their evil influences and conspire against my life. I examined my horoscope too this morning. My heart will never burn to ashes unless I own Uppur for atleast one day!"

"But you have not made up your mind about the adoption yet," said the Amatya alarmed, "and even if there was no hurry on your account, Narayana's thread-ceremony cannot be postponed any longer."

"I have been thinking of it myself," replied the Dewan, "since I looked into the horoscope this morning. If I survive the 28th of next month, I shall live on for at least seven years

more, but it would be a miracle if I outlive this crisis; the influences are so malignant, with nothing to counteract them."

"Why can we not have the adoption and the ceremony as soon as you get a little better?" demanded the Amatya, on the principle of striking the iron while it is yet hot.

"So I thought too, and the fifth of next month is a suitable day," replied the Dewan. "But that wretched girl, that stubborn devil, is still refractory, and will not consent to it, I hear. It seems she said so even last evening."

"I have been racking my brains about it, and I have come to the conclusion that we need not wait for her consent," rejoined the Amatya. "We have her letter to you which you showed me, wherein she distinctly says, 'I care little about my own property and my lord is at liberty to dispose of it as it pleases him;' those are her very words."

"Does she say so? I don't remember the words well now;" said the Dewan. "Does not she say something about the charities?"

"She does," replied the Amatya, in a tone of positive assurance, "but those are her very words about her property; I have preserved the letter carefully. Now, if you adopt Narayana as your sole heir, the matter can be easily managed, I think."

The reader will note that the words, as quoted by the Amatya, differ slightly from the original epistle in version, and very greatly in sense; but the Amatya who had quietly kept the letter his brother showed him, had, as if by a sudden flash of inspiration, skillfully and imperceptibly changed two or three of the characters in it, and the letter in his strong-box did read and mean exactly what he said!

"If those are her words, it is not a bad idea," rejoined the Dewan. "I never thought of it that way. Yes, there is no

fear then; and after all, who is there to claim her property against Narayana, and what does she want, after I am gone, but a little food daily and two or three cloths a year? Yes; you can arrange for the adoption and the thread-ceremony to come off on the 15th of next month; it must not be put off further. You may inform the Maharaja too of it to-night; but don't you say anything about my wife's unwillingness."

"Am I such a, fool, brother?" said the Amatya. "I shall rather leave the impression on his mind that it takes place with her full consent. He asked me about it some days ago, and then I told him that you had not made up your mind yet. I shall tell him now that, owing to your examining your horoscope, you have decided to have the adoption early next month."

"Yes, that will quite do," said the Dewan, "but wait; is it the true horoscope that I consulted this morning, or the one that I manufactured, as I told you, for hood-winking the Sanyasi into the belief that the girl's agreed with mine? Let me see," and he searched among the palm-leaves on a stool near his cot and took out and examined one of them.

"Yes, it is the right one, and my days are numbered I fear; and the king's case is even more certain. But don't you tell him about it: he won't thank you or me for it."

"Of course, not; and let us hope you will get over this fearful crisis and live for many years more;" said the Amatya with fraternal goodwill and piety, as he rose to go.

On opening the door of the room, he saw Clavirunda Bai walking away into the house, and concluded that she must have been listening at the key-hole.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ULTIMATUM

Clavirunda was not playing the spy purposely, or listening at the key-hole. It would have ill become the heroine of our novel: though we are afraid that few mortals, placed in similar straits, will be found above such meanness. Kamala Bai told her that morning that the Dewan had examined his horoscopes and found that he was not likely to outlive the next month. This news alarmed the poor girl, and the prospect of becoming a girl-widow brought tears to her eyes and turned her feelings in her husband's favour. She felt the bitterness of his estrangement keenly, and was eager to appease him to believe in her, arguing with him and entreating him to believe her faithfulness. True, her mind now felt the guilty love clearly, but her husband's suspicions were much worse, and she was certainly innocent in word and deed. As for her thoughts, she could have truly demanded: "Where is that palace so fair that sometimes foul things intrude not?" Her feelings were now in his favour, and she was anxious to make all possible reparation to him for her sinful and disloyal thoughts. She therefore thought it a suitable opportunity when Kamala Bai was having her afternoon nap, and went to her husband's chamber to seek a reconciliation, but found the door closed. She was about to push it open, when she heard her brother-in-law's voice from within saying: "Am I such a fool, brother? ....." She stopped and waited, and then came her husband's reply and his reference to the horoscope manufactured to hood-wink the Sanyasi. She could hardly believe her own ears, and her young heart grew bitter at the thought that she was wedded to such a man. Lost in such thoughts, she heard not even the Amatya's pious wish for his brother's recovery and long life. Then the door was suddenly opened from within, and she hastily and mechanically retreated into the house. The

information she had gained disgusted her and counteracted the generous impulse to seek reconciliation. And so he had deliberately fabricated a false horoscope to deceive her grandfather, in order to marry her and get her property! And after making her lead such a life, he was going to leave her a miserable girl-widow in her teens. Her whole nature revolted against him, and she was more disgusted than ever at such heartless selfishness and duplicity, and even thought whether she would now be happier as a widow than as the wife of such a man. The Amatya too knew of the deception, and there was no choice between the two brothers. Then she began to reflect whether Madhava too would be like his father and his uncle. Somehow, she could not believe that he would be so mean and unscrupulous. The very fact that he had acted so nobly and honourably towards her for so many years, with such a passion gnawing at his heart,—his last act was the result of a sudden impulse in a moment of frenzy and only set off his great forbearance all the more,—was a proof of his high-souled and chivalrous nature. And thinking of Madhava, one thought followed another quickly, and the awakened feelings towards her husband were swept off and effaced. But there was Kamala Bai's news confirmed by her husband,— that he would die very soon. What would become of her after that? Her own mother had followed her husband with a single scream, the moment she heard of his death, and she was extolled by all as a true and noble *sati*. But in her own case, it would be absurd, it would be preposterous to even dream of such a thing, after such a life with such a husband. He had married her against her vehement protests, by means of deliberate deception, and he had behaved so brutally and cruelly towards her all through their wedded life; and now, on his death-bed, they were not on speaking terms, and even her presence was forbidden. On her side, her girlish aversion for him had grown steadily, thanks to himself, and she now loved another. Whatever the

world might think no just God could regard such a union as a marriage-sacrament. Then, she would live the rest of her life as a widow: Kamala Bai would quit the house soon after her brother-in-law's death, and she would become the mistress of the house; her brother-in-law, the Amatya, would manage eveything, but as there was her own property which he coveted for his son, she would be treated with consideration and regard. And Madhava would return even before all this, for his brother's adoption and thread-ceremony and then,—her heart began to beat quicker and she dared not raise the castle any higher. But her fancy, in sight of and so near such pleasant scenes, could not be controlled, and led her on to the only possible end she could imagine. Her face was aglow with excitement, and it suddenly struck her that some one might be observing her in her reverie. Turning round, she saw Kamala Bai snoring on the swing at a distance, and then the analogy irresistibly forced itself on her mind. She too would be another widow like her, indulging in a sinful passion; and what was worse, causing untold misery to another innocent girl. She thought of Madhava's rich girl-wife, and how she would feel then. She herself almost hated her husband, and yet she felt so jealous of Kamala Bai, and could not be indifferent to their intrigue. How would poor Sundari Bai, who would of course love Madhava heart and soul,—for which girl could resist it?—feel towards her for stealing his heart, which was her own most sacred right, from her? No! Come what might, she would never inflict such misery on another girl, and she would even commit suicide if need be to free Madhava forever from the shameful shackles of sin and evil, and make him love his wedded wife and lead a happy and righteous life. But yet, she was so young, so full of warm life, and the very thought of death made her shudder and her hair freeze in terror. Was there no other course open to her? Yes, there was, the best, the noblest; only her sinful passion had blinded

her to it till now. There seemed no chance of prevailing upon the King to part with Uppur and found the charities; so she could gratify her dear Babaji's wishes by founding them with her own estate, Malayur, look after them herself during her lifetime,—she could not spend the rest of her unhappy life more usefully and piously,—and leave them in the hands of suitable trustees at her death. That was the best course for any childless and rich young widow; and for her, it was also a sacred duty she owed to the memory of her grandsire. In order to carry out her plan better, she decided to leave Tanjore soon after her husband's death and go away to Chidambaram, or Madura, or some other distant place. Thus lost in a reverie of rapidly succeeding fancies, she failed to notice that Kamala Bai had got up and gone into her husband's room; but she was suddenly called by name, and asked to take some hot water to the sick-chamber. She obeyed, wondering why her presence and service were needed so unusually.

Clavirunda Bai found her husband stretched on his bed, and Kamala Bai sitting by his side, massaging him. On her going near, the latter took the hot water from her hand and began to foment his abdomen. Clavirunda stood in silence at the foot of the bed-stead, gazing on the pale and emaciated form before her. She had not seen him for nearly ten days, and he had become considerably weaker and thinner. His eyes were sunken, and he closed them wearily on seeing her, as if in pain. He then whispered to Kamala Bai almost inaudibly, "Ask her."

"Clavirunda," said Kamala Bai, proceeding with the fomentation and without even looking at her, "My brother-in-law is very ill, and does not hope to live long; the stars are hostile, and who knows the will of Fate? He wishes therefore, to adopt Narayana at once, so that his soul may not lack aid on its way to salvation, and the 15th of next month has been fixed for the ceremony. Considering

everything and yielding to what he calls his dying wish,"—here her voice trembled a little and she wiped her eyes with her left elbow,—"I have consented to it and given up my cousin's son. He wants your consent too, and considering everything, I hope you will agree and give him peace of mind in his last days at least." There was a sinister emphasis on the concluding words, ill-calculated to pacify Clavirunda, or win her consent.

"Who am I in this house, and why is my consent at all needed? I am worse than a slave here and less than the meanest servant of my lord. Let him do as he pleases."

"It is not that," replied Kamala Bai. "My brother-in-law can of course adopt whom he likes and do what he chooses with his property. But he wants his brother's son to get your *Stridhana* property too. So he wishes that you should agree and treat Narayana as your son and heir."

"Did my lord marry me, or my property? If I am so useless and redundant, and am treated by him as less than a stranger, why should he seek to secure my property alone for his brothers' son? Is it right? Is it just?"

"You and your property have both become his by the marriage; and whether he treats you well or ill, it is all his pleasure," replied Kamala Bai, tactfully changing ground. "No wife is entitled to demand that her husband shall treat her to her liking, or consult her in everything."

"Of course, not; that is the privilege of others, not of wives;" said Clavirunda, bitterly, and the shaft went straight to its mark.

"You are an upstart brat of yesterday and a stranger in this house," burst forth Kamala Bai enraged "and my brother-in-law married you out of sheer pity at your forlorn, unwedded state. You have brought nothing but ill-luck and disgrace in your trail; poor Gunga, our darling and only hope, died after you came; and now your evil influence is

cutting at the root of the parent-tree itself. A less compassionate man than my brother-in-law would have poured cowdung-water over your head, beaten you with a broomstick, and turned you out into the street long ago for your shameless seduction of his nephew, your own step-son; his pity, and his solicitude for the honour and fair name of the ancient family,—he is not a mushroom of yesterday as your grandmother was,—saved you from that fate, which you so well deserved. And now, you have the impudence to talk like this to his very face, unmindful even of his present sad state. You must be simply dead to all sense of shame and womanly modesty!"

"Of course, I am the only one under this roof dead to all sense of shame and modesty," replied Clavirunda, and she began to cry and sob bitterly at the gross insults heaped upon her in her husband's presence.

"Well, well, she can reserve her tears for a few days longer and shed them when I am gone; other people at least will think well of her then," said the Dewan cruelly, after a while and addressing his words to Kamala Bai. "Ask her, will she or will she not agree to this adoption. This is her last chance, and I must have her final answer now, and then I know what to do."

The additional insult conveyed by his words and the indirectness of the question pained her still more and aroused her pride and her anger.

"I have already given my answer; my lord may adopt whom he likes and do what he wills with his property, but as for *my own Stridhanam*, I wish to invest it in charities agreeable to the wishes of my grandfather, who earned and bequeathed the estate to me, especially as there seems no prospect of the Maharaja doing so with the other village in his enjoyment; this much is my sacred duty in bare justice to my grandfather's memory. I again protest my innocence,

and I pray my lord to disabuse his mind of the foul suspicion he so unjustly harbours against me, induced thereto by shameless and treacherous tale-bearers. As there is a God above who witnesses everything....."

"Let her clear out at once and never more see my face; no, not even after I am dead; I have heard enough," exclaimed the Dewan impatiently closing his ears with both his hands and shutting his eyes in weariness and pain.

"Be gone from here this instant; you are making him worse;" said Kamala Bai angrily. "Is it for this that we called you in? But a snake will give out only venom, even if we feed it with milk and honey. Go, and reserve your crocodile tears, as he says."

And Clavirunda left that chamber, choking with grief and indignation.

CHAPTER IX

KAMALA BAI CRIES *EUREKA*!

The King is dead, Long live the King!

Pratap Singh was no more and his son Tulsaji, legitimate son of his father, reigned in his stead. Officials came from distant places to condole with and congratulate the new Maharaja, and among them, Madhava Rao, the Subedar of Pattukota. His brother Narayana's adoption and thread ceremony were over, though he did not attend them. The Dewan survived the fatal day,—he almost died on it—but was not much better in health since, and the seven years' lease of life promised by the stars seemed an impossible mockery. There was much wailing and beating of breasts on the part of Kamala Bai and numerous other female relatives of the Dewan on that critical day, and poor Clavirunda was also in great alarm and tears. But after all, the good influence

of Saturn pulled the Dewan safe through the crisis, and he got a little better, to the regret, as it seemed, of the relatives who had to return to their homes. The Dewan refused to see Madhava Rao and strictly prohibited him his house. He also warned Kamala Bai to keep a strict watch and report to him any signs of the revival of the intrigue. He did not yet despair of obtaining his wife's consent to Narayana's inheriting her property, and she was frequently exhorted to execute a document to that effect. But the one fact which astonished everybody and exercised everyone's mind in the two families was the Dewan's health,—he had successfully defeated the planets, but yet showed no further signs of recovery and continued in a bedridden, precarious state. This was inexplicable in the face of the fact of astrology granting him a new lease on his life for seven years more. Kamala Bai racked her brains about this very much, and being of a nature unable to bear suspense or doubt long, she soon hit upon an explanation which was truly diabolical. The idea entered her mind suddenly one day when she was cogitating on the matter, and turning it over within herself—several circumstances seemed to support it, and she was soon convinced that it was the true explanation. Who was more interested in the Dewan's death than his wife, and so she must be employing sorcery to destroy his life, thus counteracting the planetary influences in his favour. She was a fool not to have guessed it earlier; she now remembered that just about the time of her brother-in-law's expected death, Clavirunda was talking one day to a Kodangi who came a-begging; again, her mother's relative, a poor widow with a sinister countenance, had visited her more than once recently and talked to her in private; the servant Sarada had been absent for several hours together on some days, and on two nights she did not sleep in the house; and above all Clavirunda, who in spite of her dowry, had no cash with her and was not allowed any pin-money by her husband, had recently

given out that a massive gold ring she was wearing was lost suddenly, and this must be a feint, and she must have used the ring and her servant and her relative to prevent her husband's recovery and destroy him by means of witch-craft. She sought to be free and to be able to do as she liked with her property, and this was impossible as long as her husband lived. Reasoning in this manner within herself the suspicion became a clear and positive fact to Kamala Bai's mind soon, and she duly communicated it, in an elaborate and circumstantial manner, to her brother-in-law. The evidence visibly grew in detail and force even as the words came out of her mouth, and each slight suspicion manifested itself in speech as a clear fact, beyond the province of doubt or cavil. Kamala Bai's discovery was most opportune and was eagerly welcomed by the Dewan as solving an astrological puzzle and vindicating that most true and exact of all sciences. He at once sent for his brother the Amatya, and told him of it and praised his sister-in-law's shrewdness. The Amatya was not so credulous, but he had contracted a growing prejudice against Clavirunda on account of her persistent refusal to let his son inherit her property, and so the tale did not fall on unwilling ears. They decided to consult the able and famous magician and exorcist Padmanabhan Patteri of Malabar,[96] who was then practising his profession at Tanjore, and to take further action on his advice. Meanwhile, no suspicion was to be aroused in any way, and Clavirunda and Sarada were to be watched and shadowed more closely, a task which Kamala Bai readily undertook. The magician, whom we shall hereafter refer to by his title of Patteri, was sent for the next day, and the consultation took place in the Amatya's house, so that Clavirunda might suspect nothing. The Amatya, his wife Sona Bai, and Kamala Bai were alone present, and the door was bolted from within. After some preliminaries, the Patteri rubbed a black unguent on a leaf, and placed it on Kamala Bai's palm and told her to look intently and fixedly

at it, without winking her eyes or thinking of anything else. After a while, he began to question her, and she gave out the following story in reply:

"I see the great Anjaneya[97] standing from the earth to the sky in his full size, mighty and dreadful to behold. He is gone now, and I see the bank of a river and a cremation ground on its slope. A man is sitting there alone, with only a wet cloth about his loins. There is a mystic and intricate diagram drawn in front of him on the sand, and the wooden figure of a man lies on it. He waits for someone and looks impatiently towards the east. A woman approaches. Why, it is Sarada! She tells him something and gives him a gold ring, it is the very ring that Clavirunda was wearing! He tells her something and seems dissatisfied. Sarada takes out some money from a corner of her cloth and gives him; it is three rupees. He tells her to go away and she departs. He prays to an image he takes out of a small bag; and places it at the head of the diagram. He deposits the ring and the money in the same bag. He now takes out two nails from the bag and drives them one after the other, with a stone, into the abdomen of the wooden figure. He prays again, and then packs up everything and rubs out the diagram. He goes to the river and bathes in it, and then puts on the dress of a *Kodangi*. I see him in the town now. He enters the west-car street and stops in front of a Brahmin house and sounds his little drum. A widow comes out. It is the same woman who came to see Clavirunda more than once. He tells her something, and shows her the wooden figure with two iron nails driven into it. She goes into the house. She comes out again with some food and an old cloth and gives them to him. She tells him to go away and he does so. I see again the God Anjaneya. He is gone now."

The Patteri turned to the Amatya, and naively inquired whether the patient about whom he was consulted, was suffering from any disease of the digestive organs, and the

Amatya answered in the affirmative; then he said it was a miracle the victim was still alive, with two iron nails driven into the stomach. Then the Patteri was asked to counteract the effects of the abominable sorcery, and he replied that his opponent seemed to be an able and powerful magician, that he expected a tough fight and a taxing of all his skill and learning, and that he could not undertake the case for anything less than two hundred rupees. He also advised immediate action, as the patient's life hung by a slender and worn-out thread. He was paid twenty rupees at once and promised a hundred more on the patient's recovery. He then gave an amulet to be worn by the patient on the right wrist if a man and on the left if a woman—he pretended to be absolutely ignorant of everything about his patient—to ward off the effects of further sorcery.

After the magician had gone away, the two women grew very voluble in their astonishment at the girl's audacity and wickedness in seeking to murder her own husband.

Kamala Bai decided to keep even a closer watch on her and her servant, and to keep them confined in a room if necessary. "If only she kills my brother-in-law, she shall become a *sati* and burn with him; that will be her just reward," exclaimed she passionately, as she left the Amatya's house.

CHAPTER X

FATHER AND SON

Clavirunda had met Madhava only once since his return and it was in the backyard, some days after he came back. She went to the well to superintend the washing of some clothes by one of the servants, and he too happened to go to his backyard just then, and she suddenly saw his bust on the other side, over the fence. He did not see her at first, but

when the servant said something to her, he turned and looked, and their eyes met for a few moments; and then, recollecting herself, she ducked down so as not to be seen. But that meeting of their eyes was enough to apprise each other of the state of their hearts. The Tamil poet Tiruvalluvar, says 'that the face reflects what is uppermost in the mind, as the mirror reflects the image next to it'; and 'that when the eyes understand each other and agree, it does not much matter what the lips may utter.'[98] The servant, who was a new hand, on seeing Clavirunda hide herself, remarked; "Why do you hide so from him, madam? He is only your son." Clavirunda made no reply, and she returned into the house at once, lest Kamala Bai should see them both in the backyard and carry tales. But her heart went pit-a-pat all the same, and she could hardly attend to anything that evening, or sleep that night. She had a wild dream of becoming a widow, of being carried away by Madhava to distant country, of their living together there openly as man and wife, of Madhava's brother-in-law, Sundari Bai's brother, coming in search of them and finding them out there, and so on.

As for Madhava Rao, his heart beat even more violently, and his dream was wilder. After that mad embrace and those never-to-be-forgotten kisses, he had run away like a thief, on hearing his uncle's foot-steps. He could not help harbouring such a passion, and it did not matter anything as long as he alone suffered; but to expose himself so and behave disgracefully towards the object of his love who was his step-mother, he knew no one would sympathise with or excuse him, and his own better self condemned him unhesitatingly. But if remorse meant sincere regret and sorrow for an evil act or sin committed, he could not be said to feel it, for the memory of the kisses was too sweet to him, and the very thought of that wild embrace, her panting bosom against his breast, thrilled his whole being even now, and he was not at all sure whether, another opportunity

occurring, he would not repeat his mad act. He was however tortured by doubt and fear, as to how she took it. Did she hate and despise him for what was certainly a cowardly act? Had she no love at all for him, not even pity, and did she only look upon him as a brother, as a son? Had that wily and wanton woman, Kamala Bai, purposely misled him then from revengeful motives, and spurred him on to such an act of folly to further her own plan of ruining her rival? He was sure, and this was his only excuse, that but for her assurance that his love was fully reciprocated by Clavirunda, he would never have dared to do such a thing. What did his charmer think of his conduct? This question harassed him constantly in his exile at Pattukota, for on the answer to it depended his happiness, or misery. But he had no confidant and could not even write to any one for news. His father sent him a severe and stinging letter on his conduct, and he thence inferred that his uncle knew of it. Then she must have told her husband, in which case the answer to his question was plain enough But it was just possible that his uncle saw him run away, and coming on her immediately after, extorted from her a confession of the whole things. If this was the case, he could never forgive himself for the persecution and misery he had thus brought upon his beloved, for he knew she would be made to pay for it dearly. These conflicting doubts and fears were his companions in exile, and the refusal of his uncle to see him on his return boded no good. He was therefore anxious to meet Clavirunda, somewhere somehow, if only for a few moments, for he knew that her look would at once clear his doubts and reveal the state of her mind.

When therefore he turned on hearing the servant's words and met her tell-tale eyes, his heart stood still some moments for sheer joy, and he was transported to the seventh heaven. What did it matter, her slinking away at once? It was plain his love was returned, that he was not despised or hated for what he had done. And then his fancy ran amok as it were,

and wild schemes filled his silly head, and he could hardly eat anything or sleep that night, or for many nights after. He was not only prohibited his uncle's house, but the door of communication between the two parlours was now kept closed always. His brother, Narayana, was the only person who was frequently going to and fro, as he lived in his uncle's house now, and often came to see his parents, brothers and sisters. He was a bright and open-hearted boy and Madhava was fond of him. So great was Madhava's eagerness to establish secret communication with his beloved, that he even thought of making an innocent go-between of his little brother; but on reflection, he abandoned the idea as not only unpardonably mean, but also dangerous. Kamala Bai was an open and active foe now. He was often in his backyard on some pretext or other, but Clavirunda never happened to go there again on such occasions. The knowledge of her love made him bold, and he at last determined to open negotiations through one of the servants. He naturally pitched upon Sarada as the one likely to serve his purpose best, and began to consider how he could safely approach and sound her inclinations. He eagerly thirsted to drink deep of the pleasure which seemed so near his lips now, and all thoughts of the sinfulness of his passion and the almost insuperable obstacles in the way of its fruition, were effaced from his mind by the supreme ecstacy that filled it. He was quite ready even to elope with her to some far-off place, if only she agreed. He thirsted for the sweet of love, and no other consideration weighed with him just now. Such was the son.[99]

Let us now look at the father;—Amatya Venkanna Pandit, like most of the courtiers of his own, and, for the matter of that of any time or clime, was an ambitious and unscrupulous man. He was still the King's Amatya, but Tulsaji was a different kind of ruler from his father, and having quietly ascended the throne by his own right, was inclined to be independent of his father's ministers, of whom

he loved and respected none less than the two Brahmin brothers, the Dewan and the Amatya. He was a strong-willed man, though still young and inexperienced, and far less superstitious than Pratap Singh. He had also his own favourites and had already appointed another man as Dewan, the permanent incumbent of the office being ill and on leave, in preference to the Amatya, who feared that he might be dismissed even from his permanent post any time by a King who had no confidence in him. He had indiscreetly asked the new King more than once to restore Uppur to his brother, declaring boldly that the late Pundit Rao had meant Uppur as a free gift to his brother for wedding his grand-daughter, and Malayur as her *Stridhana* property. Tulsaji gave no reply on the first occasion; and his taciturnity generally awed his ministers. On the second occasion, the King only remarked that if that was true, it was strange that his father had not carried out the Sanyasi's wishes. Uppur seemed doomed, and the Amatya could see no chance of ever obtaining possession of it, or even inducing the King to found the charities, for he could not go back on his own words regarding the Sanyasi's instructions; and that meant that he would lose Malayur too, if Clavirunda had her own way about it. Thus, by over much greed, he had made it impossible to get Malayur with Clavirunda's consent and by fair means. If he persuaded her to petition the King for investing Uppur in charities, she would be giving the lie direct to his words, and the King might even then say that, if such were the Sanyasi's wishes, his father would have given effect to them. Possession is said to be nine points in Law, and it becomes all ten when the possessor is no other than the monarch himself. The problem that now faced the Amatya was to get Malayur at least for his son somehow.

We have already stated that he was ambitious and unprincipled, like the rest of his class, but he was not merely that; he was a reserved and silent man by nature, and in his

hearts, he was far more wicked than his brother the Dewan.[100] That was the true reason why he did not feel more keenly the outrageous conduct of his son Madhava. He was a cold and calculating man, far-seeing, without a fibre of tenderness or pity in his heart. His brain worked like a machine and did not feel or care to know whether it was a bundle of sugar-cane or a young and rosy child it was grinding in its revolution. He had hitherto looked upon Clavirunda as a mere child, somewhat spoilt by her indulgent grand-father; he had no great or sincere admiration either for her rare beauty, or culture. He was not a learned man himself, nor amorous. He considered it a great misfortune that her horoscope did not agree with his son's as he could then have easily got all the Sanyasi's property; but it was not in his nature to waste much time in vain regrets. So he at once began to help his brother actively in his plans to wed the girl himself, dimly hoping that somehow the property might still come to him through his brother's marriage, along with his brother's own. But the girl's unexpected obstinacy had made him angry, and her reasonable proposal to carry out her grandsire's wishes with her own dowry alarmed him considerably. He had therefore been cogitating incesssantly for sometime about it and evolving in his own mind and rejecting one after another as unsuitable, or unsafe, or far too openly dishonourable, many an ingenious scheme to obtain the valuable property. But somehow, he had never thought of the one plan, apparently the best, the easiest, and at the same time the most honourable, tending as it did to exalt greatly the reputation and fair name of the family in the eyes of the world; and he was ashamed that he owed its suggestion to an ignorant woman like Kamala Bai.

Yes, that was the thing; it was clear that, not withstanding astrology and the famous magician's infernal powers, his brother would not live long. Without a marked change for the better in his health, his passing away was

only a question of a few weeks, more or less; and then his wife's *sati*[101] would immediately and irrevocably secure all his and her property to his son, besides investing the family name with a halo of glory. Perhaps the girl would herself welcome the idea, sentimental and romantic as she sometimes seemed to be; but if she took a different view, it was certain she would not yield easily, and might have to be coerced. There was no time to lose and he must set about the business at once and perfect his plans, as his brother might breathe his last any moment. No one in his brother's house loved the girl, or would try to help her except her servant Sarada, and it was she whom the girl would confide in and employ to consult her relatives, or to get any information or advice from the world outside. He therefore decided to get rid of Sarada at once on some pretext or other. As for the girl's few relatives in Tanjore by her mother's side and grandmother's, none of them was much interested in her, or influential enough to be feared by him. The *sati* should, anyhow, be so arranged that few would know of it before it was all irrevocably over and the victim burnt to ashes. What other possible source of help had the girl, if she was averse to *Sati*? Yes, there was his own silly and love-sick son Madhava Rao, who though ordinarily quiet and obedient, was not to be trusted at such a crisis.

Here, there was a pause in the Amatya's machinations. He seemed to be faced with insuperable obstruction; or more likely, a new idea altogether, which diverted his thoughts into a new channel. The impression in his mind was that though the girl was quite loyal to her husband, she did not dislike his handsome and young son's passion for her, and this seemed natural enough to him. Was it not then possible, nay easy, to get her property after her husband's death, by means of this illicit passion? The Amatya had a very low opinion of female morality, and as he was not himself susceptible to female charms, he despised all those who

preferred the pursuit and cultivation of love and its pleasures to what he considered the more manly and serious purpose of life, the pursuit of political intrigue, power, wealth and fame. He had been shocked when he first learnt that his own eldest son was of an amatory temperament. He knew that the devout votaries of Cupid often behaved most unreasonably and unaccountably, and that a sensible course of conduct was not to be always expected of them. The girl was full of romantic ideas gathered mostly from erotic poems and olden stories, and she had a pertinacity of her own; his son, an ardent lover of music and the fine arts, seemed equally unpractical, and might, under her influence, prove refractory; and the combination of two such natures once made and cemented, might turn out quite formidable, and frustrate his purpose altogether. Further, such a course countenanced by him, would create loud scandal and give a handle to his enemies. While failure was not improbable, shame and ignominy were certain, and he therefore finally rejected the new idea, and determined to send away his son to Pattukota at once.

For concerting other necessary measures, he could not rely on his wife. Sona Bai had been a most faithful and devoted wife to him, and borne him six boys and two girls. She was now more or less absorbed in fasts, penances and other pious offices of religion for the salvation of her sinful soul, for she considered being born a woman in itself sinful. She took little interest in family aggrandisement and her husband's other ambitions. She was not even concerned at his missing the dewanship. For some years past, it had become a sort of tacit agreement between them, that he was to look after the worldly and material welfare of the family and she the spiritual, and this division of labour suited their different natures admirably. He had no doubt that she would regard the *sati* of her sister-in-law as a most laudable and enviable thing, for she had proclaimed it often as her own

intention to become a *sati*, if her husband predeceased her, which, may Heaven forbid! It was a short-cut to salvation which, in her opinion, no *pativrata* should neglect to take when Heaven gave her the chance. But he was equally sure that she would have no part or lot in forcibly sending the girl's soul to salvation by that route. He therefore resolved to use his wife to ascertain the girl's inclinations in the matter, as the best person, from her known views, to persuade the girl if she was wavering. If however, the girl refused the bait altogether, then he would take Kamala Bai into his confidence, and work up the scheme with her. Meanwhile, he determined to send his son and the maid-servant Sarada clean out of the way at once.

Thus it came about that, while the thoughtless son sought to pollute and dishonour the poor girl's body and soul for his own pleasure, his heartless father plotted to destroy them for his own profit. Truly has it been remarked that "the impelling forces of human activity are women and wealth." But let us not also forget that, fortunately, such men as the Amatya are indeed very rare in any country in this world.

CHAPTER XI

ORMUZD AND AHRIMAN

The ancient Persians believed that the powers of Good and Evil hovered about Man always, striving for mastery over his mind and conduct, though the ultimate decision lay with him only and how he used the God-given understanding in him. A similar belief prevailed among the early Christians. The monastic and ascetic systems of life, wherever practised, with their self-mortifications, tortures and mutilations, are traceable to the same idea and Butler only echoed the popular faith when he wrote that,

"Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
The Devil also builds a chapel there."[102]

The other great religions of the world also favour such a faith, though perhaps not so prominently. Buddha himself underwent a temptation, like Christ; and the accounts and anecdotes of saints and heroes often reveal a tacit or explicit belief in the doctrine. But all the creeds are unanimous in fixing the final responsibility for his actions on Man himself.[103]

Whether there are, or not, external powers of the air which actively try to influence mankind, it is the general experience of those who have undergone any spiritual struggle and made any conscious efforts to raise and better themselves, that a good and pious resolve is almost immediately invested and hampered by a score of unexpected impediments, though indeed preservance and courage rarely miss their reward. The saying that "hell is paved with good intentions," only illustrates how easily man is dismayed by an apparent obstacle, how readily he abandons the straight and narrow path of righteousness, and how few men are endowed with the indomitable courage and tenacity of purpose indispensable for eventual victory. Evil thoughts and intentions, on the other hand, speedily gain ground and seem to be helped in a hundred ways, so much so that one great religion at least holds man as an essentially sinful creature. The well-nigh universal belief, therefore, is based on human experience, and there was one more instance in its favour when the Amatya, having evolved his diabolical plan of action, came down from his room upstairs to set about it at once, by instructing his wife to speak to Clavirunda about the matchless piety, saintliness and glory of *sati* and ascertain the girl's attitude of mind towards it. Finding that his wife was gone to the temple, he went towards the backyard, and there was his son Madhava Rao conversing in low tones with some one who was in his brother's backyard on the other

side of the fence. On seeing his father enter suddenly, Madhava looked confused and abashed, and the Amatya saw that the other person was Sarada, the maid-servant, who hastily went away towards the well on seeing him. His son's apparent embarrassment and alarm aroused his suspicion, and he asked him what they were speaking about. Madhava replied, but not without hesitation, that he was inquiring of the servant about his uncle's health that day; and the Amatya went away apparently satisfied, to the immense relief of the young man, who had been seeking to ruin his uncle's honour rather than solicitously inquiring of his health. And the Amatya was not so easily deluded as his son thought, and he had already designed how to profit by that incident.

He went straight to his brother's house, and found that Kamala Bai had described to him the interview with the magician with great flourish and exaggeration, and almost convinced him that his wife was circumventing his destruction by foul means. The Amatya, therefore, found the soil well cleared, ploughed and levelled for the seed he wished to sow, and he related to his brother how he had just then surprised his son in a secret conspiracy with the servant Sarada. Though he was sure that his son would not connive in any foul practices against his own uncle's life, he feared that their conversation might refer to some communication between his brother's wife and his son.

"When he did not scruple to insult me in a worse way," said the sick man, "I should not be surprised even if he plotted with that devil against my life, now that he is forbidden this house. That young man will bring about the disgrace and ruin of our family, I am sure; and if you have any regard for my feelings, or wish that I should live longer, a prospect which my horoscope clearly promises which something hitherto mysterious has been thwarting and threatening, you will send him at once back to his place."

"That is exactly what I mean to do, and I shall pack him off within the next twenty-four hours, my brother;" replied the Amatya. "In fact, I came just now to tell you of it. But I think we should also get rid of that servant-woman, who seems to be your wife's confidante and accomplice, as the unguent revealed clearly. If our late Maharaja were alive now, we could even have her locked up in prison; but his son is a different man and a disbeliever, and will only laugh at us, in his supreme self-conceit, if we talk of sorcery."

"I protested against her being taken into the house on the very first day," chimed in Kamala Bai, "but my brother-in-law was so considerate and tender to his new bride and her wishes. Now the two wenches have brought him to the brink of an untimely grave, besides seeking to soil his fair name and honour. She shall quit this roof this instant; and her mistress, with her crocodile tears, shall feel that I can out-manoeuvre her in her nefarious plots. If only she kills you, my dear brother-in-law, let your spirit rest assured of this, that she shall mount the funeral pyre and burn with you to ashes. Yes, I shall set fire to her clothes and burn her, even before your corpse is borne away to the cremation ground."

"Why do you talk so of my corpse and the burning ground, Kamala, and how often should I tell you that it makes my flesh creep to hear such talk!" whined out the invalid in evident terror and vexation. "I am sure you will yourself kill me one day with your gruesome pictures of death."

"God knows how gladly I will lay down my life to save you," replied Kamala Bai remorsefully, "but I am so forgetful. I have little to live for after you too pass away; but who knows what fate intends? You said, my brother-in-law, that you would speak about my money and about some provision for me, to your brother here, in case you should die

suddenly;—but foolish woman that I again forget your injunctions. Now that your brother is here, won't you tell him in my presence, so that there may be no mistake?"

There was a pause, and the sick man closed his eyes in weariness. After a while, he opened them again, and thus addressed his brother in a feeble voice: "Perhaps she is right, and who knows what may happen? And she has been so good to me, and it is bare justice, nothing more, what she asks for," Then he explained to his brother how much of Kamala Bai's money he had with him and how it was laid out, and he instructed him to recover the amount and hand it over to her as soon as he passed away, doubling it out of his own property as a mark of his gratitude. The Amatya promised to do so, and assured Kamala Bai that she might continue to live in his brother's house as long as it pleased her to do so and even for the rest of her life, and that he would pay her the money as soon as she wanted it, without even waiting to recover it from the debtors. "Believe me, I shall continue to treat you just as now," and you shall always be as welcome in my house as in my brother's."

"That is all I want, and I am quite satisfied;" said Kamala Bai gratefully, "but I hope that my brother-in-law will survive these devilish attempts on his life, with the Patteri's help, and live happily for many years more."

"It is in God's hands, and we can only pray for His grace," said the Amatya piously, and the conference broke up.

CHAPTER XII

NOT THAT, MY GOD!

The maid-servant Sarada, who had been Clavirunda's only confidante, friend and consoler during the troublesome years of her wedded life, and whom she knew and loved tenderly

from childhood was driven out of the house that evening, with many insults and vituperations, and forbidden ever to recross the threshold on pain of being beaten with a broomstick and sent to jail as a thief. She was not allowed even to take leave of her dear mistress, and left the house,—she had literally to be pushed out by another servant,—weeping and lamenting aloud the sad fate of her beloved Bayee. That night, the King sent a peremptory order to Madhava Rao to return to Pattukota immediately; and that young man, having already witnessed Sarada's fate, bowed to the royal mandate, and left Tanjore next morning, fuming inwardly with his hopeless passion, and tormented by the thought that he had not been able even to see his beloved a second time.

The Amatya found no difficulty with Kamala Bai, and smarting under the recent insult, she was more eager than himself to mature and carry out the infernal plot. To make her co-operation doubly sure, he slyly let her understand that his fulfilment of his brother's injunctions about her money would depend on it, and that she might even expect the amount to be trebled if only she helped him to his satisfaction. They decided to tell the sick man nothing about it, as indeed there was no necessity, and to first ascertain the girl's inclinations through the Amatya's wife, who however, was not to be taken into their confidence any more than was necessary, if the girl refused to become a *sati*.

Clavirunda Bai was now practically confined to a room in the house, and spent her time in tears, or in thinking wild thoughts and fancying for herself all sorts of grievous fates or in sleep haunted by fearful and harrowing dreams. Her protestations of innocence had proved vain, and she knew that he was now accused not only of unfaithfulness to her husband, but also of attempting to murder him by sorcery. Some of her relatives came to see her on hearing of her sad predicament through Sarada, but they were not allowed by

Kamala Bai to see her, nor did she desire it, lest she should be suspected further.

She always had a great regard for her sister-in-law, Sona Bai, who, in fact, was the only person in the two houses she had learnt to respect during the six years of her married, life; but she did not know that even that lady was ill-disposed towards her now, owing to her having "bewitched" her first-born and favourite child, Madhava Rao, and thus brought on him trouble and exile. When Sona Bai came into her room leisurely next day after breakfast and sat down, ostensibly for a chat, our heroine was eager to know whether she too believed in her conspiracy with a sorcerer to kill her own husband.

"Though you are my sister-in-law, you are old enough to be my mother," said she, "and I have always looked upon you as my mother. No doubt, you too have heard of this new atrocity they accuse me of. Now tell me, I pray you, do you really believe that I am such a monster?"

"Kamala Bai saw the thing and described it, step by step," replied Sona Bai. "I too was present. What can I say? It is the most heinous sin any wife can commit, if true. Such depravity and wickedness are fortunately rare, but we do sometimes hear of them. Such women should be ruthlessly chopped up and burnt in a lime-kiln. No hell can be horrid enough for them. Her husband is the *pativrata's* god, and she need know and worship no other, as our holy books say. A woman's life is one of sin and sorrow and her salvation depends on her being a true *pativrata*. Blessed indeed is the woman who makes her lord happy in this world and dies before him and awaits his arrival in heaven; but should he unfortunately be called away before her she ensures her own and his salvation by becoming a *sati*, entering heaven hand in hand with her husband, even as on their wedding-day. What indeed has a widow to live for in this world? Though

I am old and pass my days in prayer and penance, awaiting God's will, I know my clear duty, should your brother-in-law die before me, which may Heaven forbid!"

Clavirunda was silent, not knowing what to say. Sona Bai continued after a slight pause: "My brother-in-law is only one year older than my husband, who will he fifty-two next birthday; my father-in-law, their father, died only in his sixty-second year; but my brother-in-law was always more or less sickly and he has become very weak now. The magician wondered yesterday that he was not already dead with two iron nails driven into his body."

"But how could two nails driven into a wooden doll by some man far away, enter your brother-in-law's body within this house, or in any way affect him?" asked our heroine interrupting, with truly ingenuous curiosity.

"What do I know?" replied Sona Bai impatiently. "You must ask a sorcerer about it. But, as I was saying, should my brother-in-law die suddenly, what do you mean to do?"

"I am so young and so much afraid," replied the girl faintly "and I am so ignorant of everything; I was always so, as my Babaji used to say."

"That is what my husband too said, and so he sent me to speak to you and advise you," replied Sona Bai, pleased with her own superior wisdom and holy mission. "Young or old, there is nothing left in this world for a Brahmin wife after her lord's death. You know you are accused of such horrible sins against your husband, rightly or wrongly, and you are forbidden even to minister to him on his death-bed. How can you better prove your own innocence, if you are indeed innocent,—the all-seeing God and your own heart can alone know the truth,—or expiate the sin, and above all earn for yourself a better birth and a happier fate hereafter, than by becoming a sati, and mounting his funeral pyre?"

A visible shudder passed through Clavirunda's frame,

and she looked scared and frightened, like a fawn which had just seen a ferocious tiger crouching under cover and ready to spring upon her. Her heart seemed to stand still for some seconds, and she felt as if it would cease beating altogether; and then, her eyes streaming with tears and betokening a vague terror, she stretched out both her arms and fell on her sister-in-law's shoulders, crying in a most pitiful and heart-rending tone: "Not that, my God! Not that! I am so young, so innocent. I am not conscious of any sin towards my husband, or any one else in this world. And death by fire; I always dreaded fire, and for that reason never learnt even to cook well. I left off going near the fireplace ever since a drop of hot oil once fell on my hand, and I never used to ask Babaji for fireworks during Deepavali. I cannot bear even to think of it now. I think I can even drink off some deadly poison. God knows what a wretched and unfortunate creature I am; I lost both my parents the very day I was born. I was brought up by strangers till I was five years old; then came a few short years of innocent happiness with my dear Babaji. O! Why was I ever married and why did God take away my Babaji so suddenly, leaving me to this cruel fate? Would that I had died of snake-bite and the brave and kind Englishman had not saved my life that day! And ever since I entered this house, my life has been one long, unmitigated misery, and I have not known even one hour of pleasure or happiness. You know it well; and you are the only one in the two houses who, I thought, had any compassion for me. I beseech you as my sister, as my mother, an unfortunate and helpless woman to a happy woman, I implore you by the love you bear to Ramani Bai and your other children, let me not be doomed to such a fate. I cannot bear it and I shall die even if I see the funeral pyre. I am so young, just eighteen, and though conjugal happiness and the love of children may be denied me for evermore in this birth, I can seek the salvation of my soul by spending my days in

acts of charity. My heart will not turn to ashes if I die without executing the last wishes of my beloved Babaji. I pray you, I entreat you again, save me from this doom, and help me to fulfil his dying wish, and God will remember your kindness to a helpless orphan like me. Be not afraid that I would remain here to tempt your son and spoil his life's happiness. Though I have not known a wife's happiness, I know by bitter experience, how a woman feels when her husband's love is snatched away by another, and I will never, inflict such a torment on his young wife. I shall go away to some far-off place, and live the rest of my miserable life in discharging that sacred duty to my grandfather's memory. But I cannot, I will not become a *sati*. No! No! I tremble so even to think of it;" and she wept bitterly, shivering with excitement and terror, and soon passed into a fit of sobbing.

"I am sure, I cannot understand you at all," replied Sona Bai coldly, at the same time freeing herself from the girl's embrace rudely and laying her form, convulsed with sobbing, on the ground. "But of course, you can do as you please; no one is forced to become a *sati*."

And she really could not understand or sympathise with such an attitude of mind in a Brahmin wife.

CHAPTER XIII

MAN PROPOSES

Sona Bai informed her husband of the result of her mission, and that the girl seemed to be an incorrigibly worldly-minded and sensual creature, with none of the noble traits of a true *pativrata*. She was simply disgusted, and affirmed that she would spend no more of her precious breath or time on such a wench. The girl's earnest and piteous pleading only served to confirm her in her bad opinion of her, and she wound up her indignant account of the interview with the remark that

it would be a stigma and an insult to the thousands of true *pativratas* who had already become *satis*, if such a reprobate joined their ranks.

"One must not judge another so harshly;" replied the pious Amatya. "She may yet change her mind on reflection. As long as there is life, there is hope."

"It would be a miracle, if she changes as you say;" said Sona Bai, with an incredulous shrug of her shoulders, as she left her husband to get ready for her evening visit to the temple.

The Amatya at once called in Kamala Bai, and they discussed together various schemes, for making a *sati* of Clavirunda, on the Dewan's death; but no plan seemed quite satisfactory.

"Why all this bother?" exclaimed Kamala, "I shall set fire to her clothes as soon as my brother-in-law dies, and we can attribute it to accident; she fully deserves it."

"That will not do for more than one reason, "replied the Amatya thoughtfully. "It will give rise to suspicion and scandalous rumours; the servants will somehow scent the truth and have us in their power; and it will deprive us of the glory, which *sati* will reflect on the name of the family; *sati* it must be, and *sati* it shall."

"But we must send for the Patteri again and learn what he has done, and whether my brother-in law cannot after all be saved, though as a matter of fact, he is much worse to-day," said Kamala Bai, changing the topic.

The Amatya remained thoughtful for a while, and then replied that their first care must of course be to save the invalid if possible, and that he would send for the Patteri at once. Kamala Bai then went away to attend on the patient who was, as stated by her, rapidly sinking. Before they parted, they agreed upon one point, that none of their

relatives should be apprised of the Dewan's critical condition, and that the house should be kept free of strangers as far as possible.

An hour later, the Amatya was closeted in his own room with the Patteri.

"The patient is much worse since our last interview," remarked the Amatya, "and your amulet has done no good."

"Then the enemy must be busy again, employing even more dangerous means;" replied the Patteri. "Where is that widowed lady? I must consult Anjaneya again."

"Pshsh! No more of that;" said the Amatya impatiently. "Reserve that sort of thing for credulous old fools and woman. You are a man of business, and I know yours is no easy profession, or one for a simpleton. We ought to be able to understand each other without all this beating about the bush. You know who I am?"

"Yes, Your Excellency. "

"And who the patient is?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"And how ill and near death he is?"

"Yes, Your Excellency; it is no wonder that with two iron nails driven into his stomach,—"

"Am I wasting my words and precious time on a genuine mountebank and a fool?" burst out the Amatya, apparently losing all patience. "I formed a better opinion of you than that, I rarely make a mistake. Won't you leave off your quackery, and come to business?"

"Very well, Your Excellency, I now understand."

"You know how ill my brother is?"

"Yes, Your Excellency, he is dying, and may breathe his last any moment."

"You are a clever and successful mesmerist?"

The Patteri seemed to hesitate.

"At least with women?" resumed the Amatya.

"Yes, Your Excellency; I rarely fail with them."

"You have come here from far-off Kerala, and with all your name among the masses here, you earn only a precarious twenty or thirty rupees a month?"

"Your Excellency knows everything."

"Money is therefore your only aim?"

"I am poor, Your Excellency, and have a large family who depend more or less on what I am able to earn and send from here;" replied the Patteri.

"How long will you take to mesmerize a young woman and get her under your complete control, to do your bidding readily?"

"That depends on the subject and the opportunity I have of operating on her."

"Say, a silly, speculative sort of girl, her nerves already in high tension? "

"If she consciously helps, or even quietly submits, a few minutes will do, Your Excellency; but if she resists, more than one sitting may be necessary."

"Will a thousand satisfy you?"

"For what, your Excellency?"

"To mesmerize such a girl and make her do my bidding?"

The Patteri looked at the crafty and sinister face of the Amatya a little curiously, and seemed to muse for a moment whether, after all, the consummate and impassive man before him was also a slave to the universal passion, and at such an age too; but it was only for a moment, and he replied

presently:

"Do what; Your Excellency?

'My bidding: whatever I bid, through you of course."

"Your Excellency rightly took me to be a man of business: I must know what, before I answer."

There was a pause, and on the Amatya's part now, and a fairly long pause too it was. He seemed lost in thought, and to hesitate and hunt for words, he whose sharp questions had come out like the shots from a quick-firing maxim gun till now, to use an anachronous but not inapt simile. At last, he said slowly, weighing each word as it fell from his lips:

"My sister-in-law longs to become a *sati* on my brother's, death, being a true *pativrata* and deeming naught more on eartb worth living for; as indeed, what is there for a loving and devoted Brahmin wife, who is also childless,"—here the Amatya involuntarily bit his lip, as if he had made a false step, and he continued after a moment,—"to live for on this earth, after her husband passes away?"

"Nothing, Your Excellency," said the Patteri imperturbably, and returned the Amatya's inquisitive glance with perfect ingenuousness.

"But being quite young and full of warm life, she is afraid that her resolution may fail at the nick of time."

"Life is sweet to all, especially in youth, Your Excellency;" interposed the Patteri. "I had a daughter who died of an accident in her eighteenth year, her clothes caught fire and she was badly burnt."

Here the Amatya gave start, but he was quite calm the next moment.

"She lingered for a few days and then died, my poor girl Parvati; but though she was so badly burnt and would have been a perfect fright to look at had she lived, she was

so loth, so very loth to die, Your Excellency. Life is sweet, especially in youth."

The Amatya paused again, immersed in thought and the Patteri was also silent. After a while, the former resumed:

"But this girl, my brother's wife, is so reluctant to live as a widow and so eager for salvation, being a cultured and high-souled *pativrata*,— — —"

"Not like the other silly and speculative girl who is a mere bundle of nerves; I understand, Your Excellency; but,— —I am not your man."

"Then shall I stop here? There is no use going on any further and you won't consent? I want you only to help her carry out her own noble resolve, which is so praiseworthy."

"No, Your Excellency; I am poor, but,[104]—Your Excellency no doubt understands."

"Very well, then; I never made such a mistake before; but I can at least rely on your silence about this."

"Perfectly, Your Excellency."

"Here, take this; and from to-morrow, come and practise your profession a little daily, in my brother's house, for his speedy recovery; the ladies desire it."

"I shall do my best, and Your Excellency need not be anxious about me," replied the Patteri, quietly pocketing the five gold mohurs which the Amatya gave him, and he left the house, a richer and much astonished man.

When the Patteri was gone, the Amatya called a servant and ordered him to fetch at once Hakim Fakir Muhammad Ali Saheb, a unani physician who lived in the next street. While the servant was about his errand the Amatya was immersed in thought, and, much of it was of the nature of self-castigation for what he considered an unpardonable act of indiscretion. He frankly despised himself, and was

extremely vexed and angry. The Hakim, who was an old man, with a flowing, silvery beard which gave him a patriarchal appearance, soon arrived, and put an end to his cogitations. He left after a short interview, and with only a silver coin, promising to go home and bring presently the medicine required by His Excellency. Soon after his departure, Kamala Bai entered the room in great agitation and tears, but still without loudly giving way to grief, and informed him that his brother, the Dewan, was dead. The Amatya's grief for his brother's death was very brief and scarcely perceptible, but in fairness to nature, we are bound to state that two or three drops of tears involuntarily oozed out of his crafty eyes which he wiped at once. He reminded Kamala Bai that they had yet to complete their plans, and could not therefore afford to indulge in grief, and his own example and exhortation had the desired effect on her.

"And where is she?" he demanded.

"In her room," replied Kamala, "She does not know yet and I have bolted the room outside."

"And the servants?"

"None of them knows of it yet. He asked for a sip of sherbet, and even as I was pouring it out, he suddenly raised his head in a jerk and fell back dead on his bed. I was about to scream, but remembered at once, and controlled myself. I closed his lids which were open, and covered the body with his blanket and came away here, locking the door outside. O, he is dead, my dear brother-in-law is dead; that wicked girl has killed him and he has left me alone and forlorn in this world," and she began to weep and wail.

"Now, don't be silly," said the Amatya sternly, as he closed her mouth with his hands and prevented her wailing aloud. "I was just admiring you for your presence of mind and foresight. Have I not lost my only brother? Think of the revenge we owe to his memory, and control your grief for a

short while longer. It is now 6 p.m. and it is very lucky he died in the evening and our house is close to the river; but wait, are you sure he is dead and it is not a swoon?"

"Quite sure," replied Kamala Bai, "in fact, I remained there for some time before coming here, just to have my cry out and not be betrayed by my grief, and I examined him carefully, thinking it might be a swoon. He is quite dead."

"Well then," continued the Amatya, "we must keep it secret for two or three hours longer, not even letting my wife know of it. At about 9 p.m., or even later, the news may be given out, and you may then have a little crying, but not for long, being late in the night. I shall then send for the priest and only the nearest relatives, and get everything ready for the funeral early in the morning. Can you trust any of your female servants implicitly?"

"There is Kalyani who is as reliable as myself: she too hates the girl as much as I do, though for a different reason," replied Kamala Bai.

"Well then, keep her with you in this room, and mark well, what I tell you now." He then gave her some detailed instructions in a low tone, exhorting her to remember and carry them out to the letter.

"I shall see to everything else," he said finally, "Remember our vow of revenge, and remember also that I shall judge of you and reward you solely by your conduct to-night. I shall myself inform my wife that the girl wishes to become a *sati*, and keep her out of your way."

"Don't have any anxiety about my part of the business. It is easy, as you say, and with Kalayani's help, I shall manage it to your entire satisfaction;" replied Kamala Bai.

"That is all right then;" said the Amatya. "You may return to the sick-chamber now and see that no one else enters it, or gets an inkling of the affair. I shall bring you the

drug presently. Here, give me those keys before you go; I have to refer to some of his documents;" and without waiting for a reply, he quietly took away his brother's keys, which were hooked in a bunch to her waist-cloth and hung by a gold chain.

"There are my keys too in the bunch," she faltered out, by way of protest.

"Never mind, and leave me now to attend to my part of the work. I shall come and tell you when you may give out the news to the household; but I may not have another opportunity to instruct you again. So, remember carefully all I have said, and that I shall deal by you by your work to-night. There, go, and prove yourself the clever and capable woman I have always taken you to be." And he gently touched her back, and pushed her towards the door, with an encouraging smile.

She left meekly and without another word.

Her retribution, she felt, had already commenced, even while her lover's corpse was yet warm; another man, who had never dared to do so before, had outraged what little of womanly modesty was left in her, thrice within a few minutes, by familiarly and freely touching her person; she was deprived of the keys, the sceptre which had proclaimed her sovereign sway over the house for so many years; and she was now unceremoniously ordered about, where she had before commanded and was always consulted with marked deference. But she also felt there was no help for it.

CHAPTER XIV

GOD DISPOSES

The day dawned on a vasantha morning, as mild as it was bright and fresh. Masses of grey fleecy clouds, fringed with

the gold of the rising Sun, paraded the horizon in the east, like the brilliant troops and gay crowds that precede an imperial procession; and all that region of the sky, and indeed all creation, was aglow with unutterable joy, as at the approach of a mighty and well-beloved monarch of the world. The great Sun-god, Savita, soon arose from his ocean-bed, and his face was like a shield of molten gold, which sheds a halo of glory all around, joyful and wondrous to behold. Without having ever witnessed an Indian sunrise, no Max Mueller or Buhler,[105] however learned in oriental lore and gifted with the divine inspiration of poetry, can fully enter into the spirit those stirring hymns of ecstacy, which our forefathers never tired of pouring out of their overflowing hearts towards their beloved Savita:

"We meditate on the adorable light of Savita, the supreme Lord of the Universe. May he enlighten, our intellects!"[106]

"The supreme being is the only real existence; all things exist in Him; He pervades the whole Universe: He alone should be adored by those seeking supreme bliss; He is the sole creator; the Sun who illumines and warms the Universe, is a symbol of Him; He is truth Eternal."

"Lord Savita daily appears in the Heavens; He sustains Gods and men: He comes in a golden chariot, illuminating all the worlds; adoring the Sun, God among the gods, the loftier Light that rests above darkness and sin, we attain union with that most Excellent Light; His steeds or rays bear Him aloft, the God who knows the ways of all living beings, Surya, that all may look on and worship Him. The wonderful collection of rays has risen. This orb is the eye of earth, air and heaven; this orb has filled the earth, air and heaven with light everywhere. Surya is the soul of all things that move and all that move not. This brilliant Eye, on whom, as Lord of the sacrifices, the Devas depend for their oblations, rises

in the East. May we live a hundred years to see Him! May we live in plenty, be happy in His presence, learn the secrets of the Vedas from our preceptors, and impart them to our disciples! May we never be defeated for a hundred years and live long to see the Sun and adore Him! May He who rises with resplendent glory from the midst of waters,—out of the Eastern ocean,—the bright-eyed and all-wise Surya who showers all blessings,—May he make me pure in mind!"

So sing gloriously and joyfully some of our ancient hymns. The Christian Bible, the Veda of another Eastern people, also proclaims that "truly the light is sweet and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun."[107]

"The wonderful orb, filled the earth, air and heaven with light everywhere;" and light is life and joy to all creation. Gleeful, bright-winged birds sang merrily, and made love to one another from trees and garden-hedges, whose green or golden leaves glistened gladly at the magic touch of the sun-beams, and displayed here and there a wanton wealth of colour in many a gay and gaudy flower. Graceful palm-trees proudly towered their glossy heads aloft in the sky, disdaining alike the pigmy shrubs which seemed to crouch at their feet, and the leafy creepers which bedecked in bridal flowers, wound their under arms around their trunks in loving embrace, and vainly aspired to reach their tops to kiss them on their lips. A balmy breeze, laden with the mingling fragrance of mango, jasmine, and a score of other blossoms and flowers, and the pleasant smell of ripening paddy-fields, was blowing gently along the Vennar bank, filling all the atmosphere with a rare and refreshing sweetness. Suddenly, a peal of native music, and a loud but unintelligible, unanimous cry rose from a small crowd of people, mostly men, on the inner slope of the river-bank. Looking at the gathering more closely, there was seen a funeral pyre in the middle, and a corpse on it. The Amatya was there, and seemed to be one of the chief mourners; but

a little boy, with only a small, wet cloth about his loins, his long dripping hair hanging loose behind his back, was performing the funeral rites, under the guidance of an old man who was presumably the priest. There were also three or four women, one of whom was our heroine, beautifully and gorgeously dressed in a bright red silk, with flowers in her hair and garlands round her neck. She had a red saffron mark on her broad forehead, and a peculiar, unearthly lustre in her large, beautiful eyes. Presently, the boy set fire to the pile, which, after sending forth a few volumes of smoke, blazed out in flames.

Just then an elderly native woman came running up the river-bank from the side of the town, in great excitement, closely followed by an English officer and some soldiers fully armed. It was Sarada, and her followers could hardly keep up with her, so fast she ran. She was the first to reach the top of the, bank and see the funeral party on its inner slope, not fifty yards from where she stood. The next moment, there was a sudden cry of *"Sati Mataki Jai"* from the Amatya and a score of other voices, and the music played loudly and incessantly, Claviruda Bai was dragged towards the pyre, and suddenly lifted bodily and placed upon it. Then a piercing shriek rose high above all the other cries and the vehemently pealing music, and the *Sati* jumped, or fell to the other side rolled upon the ground. Three or four persons, still shouting frantically, rushed forward to pick up and place her unconscious form on the burning pile, the Amatya and Kamala Bai being foremost among these. But the English officer and his men were already upon them, and the crowd fell back on all sides in sheer amazement and terror. The officer took in the situation at a glance, and lifting up the *sati* in his arms, ran back with Sarada, followed by his men who came guarding behind. It was all so sudden, so unexpected, that there was no protest or resistance of any kind. A carriage drawn by two horses now came up and

met the officer at the outer slope of the bank. He entered it with Sarada and his precious burden and the carriage was driven away very fast, followed by the soldiers at a smart run. [108]

Such was the will of God on that joyous vasantha morning.

BOOK III

"A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground, applying to her ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell;
To which, in silence hushed, her very soul
Listened intensely; and her countenance soon
Brightened with joy; for from within were heard
Murmurings, whereby the monitor expressed
Mysterious union with its native sea."[109]

CHAPTER I

RUNNING DOWN THE GAME

It was noon and the day very hot, quite unlike what the mild morning had promised. Lyttelton was pacing the front verandah of his bungalow in Manambuchavadi, his pipe in his mouth, and he looked out curiously from time to time as if he expected a visitor. He was evidently in great excitement; his brows were knit together and there was a dangerous fire lurking in his eyes. On the two occasions we saw him before this day, there was no inkling of the element in his character which now seemed predominant. This brave, chivalrous, handsome, philosophic Englishman,[110] who had impressed the Sanyasi as a wiser young man than many of his race and won the old man's goodwill by his unlikeness to his countrymen, was after all genuinely English, ever ready to blaze into fury at the sight of any great wrong or injustice, especially by the strong and powerful towards the weak and helpless. "There they are at last!" exclaimed he suddenly. He ran into the house for a minute, as if to make sure of something; then returned to the verandah and resumed his pacing up and down.

A noisy crowd or thirty of forty men, some ot whom

had sticks and staves pulled out of garden-fences, or knives in their hands, came towards the bungalow from the direction of the river. They halted outside the compound, the noise subsided or was hushed, and there was a short consultation, during which several fingers were pointed at the Englishman, who pretended not to notice. After a while, the Amatya and another, whom Lyttelton recognised as the priest, entered the compound and came towards the verandah, the rest standing outside in a menacing attitude, under the shade of a large margosa tree. Lyttelton continued his perambulations; but on reaching the shed in front of the verandah, the Amatya unceremoniously called out: "Sir!"

The Englishman turned suddenly and angrily on them: "Go away; is this the time to beg? Are you sun-proof as well as shame-proof?"

"We are not beggars," said the Amatya ruffling up. "Don't you recognise me? I am the Maharaja's Amatya."

"O is that you? I beg your pardon, " replied Lyttelton, standing on the edge of the verandah. "You see, I have never seen you unclad like this before. But, what brought you here in this baking sun and where is your palki?"

"The woman whom you so suddenly carried away this morning is my brother's wife. You know my brother, the Dewan who was on leave: he died last night, she is his wife; and unwilling to survive him, she became a *sati*, as befits a true *pativrata* according to our *shastras*."

"Is your brother dead?" said Lyttelton interrupting, "I am so sorry to hear that, so very sorry. I always liked the old man, especially his account of Count Lally and how he blew six holy Brahmins from the cannon's mouth. He never could understand that Brahmins and Pariahs are all one to us,"

"As I was saying, my brother's wife was performing *sati*, as ordained by our *shastras*, when you not knowing, our

customs well, came in and carried her away. You have thus interfered in a most holy rite of our religion and it is with the greatest difficulty I have persuaded the indignant multitude standing yonder that it is all due to your misplaced humanity and ignorance of our customs. I have entreated them to have a little patience, promising to interview you and recover the *sati*."

"And what will you do with her now?"

"Do with her? Why, she has become a *sati*, consecrated to the God Agni, and she will complete the sacrifice;" replied the Amatya.

"But if she is unconscious? Or unwilling?"

"A holy sacrifice like this must be completed."

"But surely, you don't mean to tell me that you will deliberately burn to death an unconscious or unwilling girl? That will be cold-blooded murder, you know."

"But she was willing, she longed to become a *sati*!" replied the Amatya,

"Anyhow, you have no right to outrage our religion in this manner and keep a *sati* with you," exclaimed the priest, who had been hitherto silent. "Is it not lawful for us to do what we will with our own? Surely *Kali* is ripening, that *Mlechhas* and foreigners dare to molest us in the holiest offices of our ancient religion; this is not your country and she is not one of you. Will you, or will you not restore the *sati* at once? What right have you to keep her?"

"The most sacred and inviolable right," retorted Lyttelton with rising temper. "Do you not know that the saviour of a life has a greater right to it than any one else in this world, and that he who seeks to destroy it, has no right whatever, even if he were the very author of it? I have saved the life of this girl twice now, once from a venomous snake-bite, as you may have heard, Amatya, and again to-day from a death

even worse. And do you, inhuman swine that you are, whose sole possible excuse is your ignorance, ask me why I keep her from your clutches?"

"You should not abuse us like this, sir," 'rejoined the Amatya angrily." This old man here is a learned and venerable priest, and I certainly deserve better of you for my intercession in your behalf with the mob there; I advise you in all sincerity, give up the *sati* at once, and before worse befalls. Believe me, I am not misrepresenting facts, or exaggerating the gravity of your outrage."

"The girl has been badly burnt and is still unconscious;" replied Lyttelton more calmly. "She sometimes mutters incoherent words in her delirium; twice she screamed. God knows whether she will ever regain consciousness. This is the second time it has pleased the Almighty to make me the instrument for saving her life, and I'm damned if I'll give her up to you, until she recovers, and I know her own wishes. I half suspect that this is another brutal and deliberate murder in the name of your cursed religion. I can understand the learned and venerable Priest, and I can understand the mob there; but I don't understand you, Amatya, unless indeed you have a finger in the pie."

"If you say so, that mob there....."

"Please don't interrupt me; I am coming to that. You know I am not a coward to take fright at a mob like that, and, probably, you know that I shoot fairly straight. Besides,—orderly!" called out Lyttelton, in a louder tone.

A Mahomedan sepoy came from within the house and saluted.

"Are they all ready?" asked Lyttelton,

"Only twelve more have come, Huzur!"

"Too much by half; I expected a better fight, seeing who led the pack. Send them here, by the right side of the house."

The sepoy disappeared, and almost immediately, a score of English soldiers, with muskets loaded and bayonets fixed, marched in and stood awaiting further orders. The priest looked terrified, and the Amatya's countenance showed that he was certainly not prepared for this contingency. "I am not a Lally," said Lyttelton calmly, "but when a helpless girl is being murdered in cold blood, I don't look to the sanctity of the offenders. You may send in your mob, Amatya, and I shall soon pacify them myself."

"This,—this is war against us—against the Maharaja," stammered the Amatya. "We must report this to His Highness."

"I'll save you that trouble too, if you like," retorted the Englishman. "I know the King; I did him some slight service not so long ago, as you know well. I shall ask him myself whether it is his pleasure that such murders should take place in the name of religion, in his own capital, and engineered by his own private secretary."

"You are unjust to me," said the Amatya protesting vehemently. "She became a *sati* willingly; in fact, she yearned to become one and enter heaven with her deceased husband."

"I shall take that only from her own lips on her recovery," replied Lyttelton, "and till I so learn her own wishes, I will not give her up to any one, priest or courtier, not even if the King himself wished it. But Tulsaji is a different man, and he will not be so cruel, or ungrateful."

"How can she, a Brahmin, and a holy *sati* too, stay with you even for a day?" demanded the Amatya.

"Well," replied Lyttelton, "if that is all that troubles you, I promise you as a gentleman, that she shall not touch any food or drink which you may consider polluted. I have only dressed her burns, and she has not taken even a drop of milk or water yet. My writer is a Maratha Brahmin, and I shall ask him to bring her what food she needs. He is one of

you; and luckily, I engaged him last week. You must know him Amatya; he was your brother's son-in-law, Narahari Rao. You may ask him whether I give her any prohibited or polluted food. Her own maid-servant, who told me of your infernal plot this morning and not a minute too early as it turned out, is nursing her now; and a most loving and sensible nurse she seems to be too".

"So you say you will keep her till she recovers and assures you how willing and eager she was to become *sati*?" asked the Amatya, "I am sure she will not thank you for your interference."

"I need no thanks from any one," replied Lyttelton curtly.

"You say she is unconscious; let me see her," said the Amatya suddenly.

"My word must be enough; but since she is your own sister-in-law, and it is possible you act thus in good faith, I shall show her to you," replied Lyttelton, as he led the way into the house. The priest, though, unwilling to enter a mlechha's house, followed them; his looks showed that the proximity of British guns and bayonets was still less to his liking. They came out shortly, and the Amatya and the priest went away at once, apparently satisfied. There was another brief consultation, and then the mob dispersed.

CHAPTER II

THE RECOGNITION

Another bright and joyous morning, even more glorious than the former; but Lyttelton did not ride out as was his custom. He watched the sunrise from his verandah which commanded a clear view of the eastern horizon. He rarely missed a sunrise or sunset in India, if he could help it. After the golden chariot, yoked with seven radiant steeds[111] of different

hues, had shot up a little on its upward course, Lyttelton went into the house. Our heroine was lying on a camp bedstead; Sarada, who had been watching her mistress all night, had fallen asleep through sheer exhaustion, and was lying on the floor at the foot of the bed. Lyttelton opened the windows which Sarada had closed native fashion, and let in God's free light and air into the stifling room. He then stood by the bed-stead, and gazed on the unconscious form stretched upon it. The face was still beautiful, but very pale; and the curls on the head, had been partly singed by the fire. Fresh air and light played upon it now, and Lyttelton saw, or fancied he saw, the eyelids quiver a little; and soon the eyes slowly opened and stared vacantly at him. Lyttelton looked into them eagerly; for a moment he feared that she had lost her reason. But intelligence soon returned to those beautiful eyes and finding her speech with an apparent effort, she asked feebly—"Where am I?"

"Here, in my bungalow, and quite safe. No one can harm you now. Don't you know me? Have you not seen me before try and remember," said Lyttelton eagerly.

His voice seemed to awaken some dim and far-off memory within her, but she could not recollect it. "And Kamala Bai, where are she and Kalyani? And the corpse?" she asked.

"The corpse has been burnt and you are quite safe. No one can harm you now," replied Lyttelton.

"But Kamala Bai and Kalyani?" asked she again.

Lyttelton could give no answer, and he woke the sleeping Sarada. She started up, muttering some gibberish in her broken dream, and seeing that her mistress was awake, rushed towards her with mingled joy and grief, exclaiming: "Are you awake, my darling! Have you opened your eyes after all, and do I see you alive!" Lyttelton told her to be quiet, and not to excite her mistress. The patient gazed on

Sarada intently for a while, and said suddenly; "Why, you are Sarada! Why did you come back? Go away at once, or she will beat you and abuse you. Go away before she sees you."

"She is not here, and she cannot beat or abuse me, or maltreat you, my poor unlucky darling, any more. This is not their house; this is the bungalow of this brave and noble Feringhi who saved you from their flames. May the all-merciful God bless him for it for evermore! May he become a Maharaja! He has also driven them away, even that great and all-powerful man, your wicked brother-in-law, whom I would keep in prison rather than as my Amatya, if I were the Maharaja, when they came to seize you again to murder you, those cruel vultures. He will guard you from all harm hereafter, and I shall never more leave your side, however much I may be abused or beaten. And I am so glad now, my own darling, my beloved Bayee, that you are not dead; and I am sure that the clever white man will soon cure all your fearful burns," babbled Sarada, in the joy of her heart, quite unmindful of Lyttelton's admonitions not to excite the patient too much. Clavirunda remained silent for a while, and seemed to be slowly recalling the past. She closed her eyes in weariness, or in her efforts to recollect her wandering and confused thoughts but soon opened them again, and gazed at Sarada and Lyttelton alternately. More than once, she moved her lips as if to ask a question, but she remained silent, thinking. At last, she seemed to regain her consciousness and memory; gazing intently at Lyttelton for some minutes, suddenly she asked:—"Is that not the emerald brooch which the Maharaja gave me?"

"The same."

"And how did it come to you? 1 gave it to the brave Englishman who relieved the siege and saved my life. Did he give it to you?"

"No."

"I thought he would not," said she musingly, and after a few minutes, she exclaimed suddenly—"You are he and you have saved my life a second time. Yes, I am certain of it now; there was something familiar in your voice, but it was remote and faint and I could not recollect till now."

"I am he and it has pleased God to save your life once again through me," he replied. "I am so glad to see you well; you need fear no harm from any one hereafter."

She closed her eyes again and gently murmured, perhaps, her thanks to God and to her deliverer.

Lyttelton soon learnt who Kamala Bai and Kalyani were and why almost her first question was about them; and also what little truth there was in the Amatya's story of her longing to become a *sati*. In reply to Sarada's questioning, she said; "I was in my room, weeping and lamenting my sad fate, when Kamala Bai opened the door and called me to supper. It was a little after dusk, and I asked why I was to sup so early. She replied that my husband was very poorly and not expected to live through the night, and so there was to be an early supper. I said I was not hungry and did not want any food, and I begged her to let me see him, and assure him once again of my innocence, if his condition was so bad; but she refused this, saying that the sight of me would hasten his death, and went away locking the door outside. She returned after a few minutes with a cup of milk and persuaded me to drink it, which I did, so as not to offend her. She then left me. I soon felt giddy and dazed and became unconscious. After, I do not know how long, I awoke from my swoon, vigorously shaken by her, but still half-dazed, and she told me that my husband was dead. I could not cry, and I have only a dim consciousness of what she said. Kalyani came into the room soon after, and they led me between them to a vacant room in my brother-in-law's house and locked the door from within. I wanted to lie down and sleep, but they said it would be a great shame and scandal

if I slept while my husband lay dead; they would keep me company and help me to keep awake. They made me walk up and down the room, holding me between them and pinching me when I fell asleep on their shoulders even while walking. The night seemed endless, and the sleeplessness was a torture to me; in fact, it was the only distinct feeling I had all through. At last some one knocked at the door two or three times. They then took a small phial from somewhere in the room and wanted me to drink what was in it; they said that it was a good medicine to make me less sleepy and faint. I suspected that it was poison and refused to take it; but between them both, they made me swallow it. Soon a strange elation of spirits took hold of me. I felt lighter and lighter, and as if I would soon rise in the air and fly away; but beyond this feeling, I could not remember, or understand anything. I have a dim memory of being led through a crowd behind my husband's corpse, and also of my dress and ornaments being changed by Kamala Bai and Kalyani before it; I remember a great noise of people shouting, and music, and then I suddenly felt my limbs being eaten away by fire, and I always dreaded fire so much; and then I screamed and fell. I don't remember anything afterwards till I awoke just now and found myself here, with you both, my noble saviour and my dear Sarada." And there was a smile of joy and gratitude on her pale parched lips.

"My God!" was the only exclamation which escaped Lyttelton, as he listened to this tale. Sarada, was more voluble and explicit, but his further questions cut short her harangue, which was far from complimentary to Kamala Bai and Kalyani and placed the Amatya too in the dock.

"But why did they want to destroy you?" asked Lyttelton.

"Why, because her brother-in-law wanted her own property too and she would not give it up;" replied Sarada. "I told you yesterday why that shameless woman Kamala

Bai hated the poor innocent darling and tried to ruin her in all manner of ways. She and Kalyani Bai were always friends; and there is nothing which Kalyani Bai will not do for the sake of a few rupees; he, no doubt, made them his tools for his own purpose; catch him at anything if you can; he is too clever for that. These silly wicked women easily became his willing tools, no doubt. It is all quite clear to me now. But God be praised, she is saved after all. That's why they drove me out so suddenly; it is all plain to me now."

It was plain now even to Lyttelton, and he marvelled at the consummate scoundrelism of the Amatya.

"Let them keep my property if they want it and leave me alone. I can beg, if need be; but I shall have nothing more to do with any of them, nor shall I ever again cross their threshold," said Clavirunda.

"But why should they have your own *stridhana* and why should you be afraid of them any longer?" exclaimed Sarada. "Why should you go a-begging, letting them enjoy your millions; and how will you fulfil the old master's wishes if you do so?"

Lyttelton too was of the same opinion; but he advised perfect quiet for the present. The matter might be considered at leisure, after Clavirunda was cured of her burns and had completely got over the dreadful shock.

CHAPTER III

MADHAVA RAO RETURNS

Nearly three months had elapsed since the attempted murder. Both Lyttelton and the Amatya had complained to the King, and an inquiry had been held with the result that nothing was proved against the Amatya, or even against the two women, who asserted that Clavirunda Bai swooned away on hearing of her husband's death; that on their restoring

her with great difficulty, she declared her resolve to become a *sati* and implored them to give her some stimulant which would help her to remain firm to the end, as she had a morbid fear of fire, and that pitying her plight and thinking it meritorious to assist her in carrying out her noble resolve, they gave her some country-arrack, and nothing more. All these statements were testified to by several witnesses, while Clavirunda's story was not corroborated by any one. So the culprits escaped, but Tulsaji found an excuse in the affair to dismiss his Amatya.

On sifting carefully the details of the whole matter as far as he could learn it, and knowing the nature of Tulsaji, and his difficulty in paying regularly the annual tribute to his suzerain, Lyttelton advised Clavirunda to drop Uppur altogether, and to petition the King only for the restoration to her of her own *stridhana* estate, Malayur, which her late husband had been enjoying ever since their marriage. But the Amatya contended that she had already given it away unconditionally to her late husband, his own brother, who in his turn had bequeathed it to his adopted son Narayana. He argued that she was not entitled even to any maintenance, in as much as she had renounced her vow after once becoming a *sati*, and was now living shamelessly with a *mlechha*, in open defiance of all caste regulations and rules. The King thereupon referred her petition for due inquiry and disposal according to law to his Pradwivaka, or chief Judge.

Clavirunda was now quite cured of her burns which, how ever, left several large and ugly scars on her legs and shoulders. She lived with Sarada in a small out-house attached to Lyttelton's bungalow and within his compound, because she was afraid of the Amatya. She did not wish to leave her deliverer's powerful protection until she won her suit and was able to realise the value of her property and leave Tanjore for ever, in order to carry out her grand-father's dying wishes elsewhere, in some distant and holy place.

When her wounds had healed a little under Lyttlton's and Sarada's careful dressing and she was able to move about, she felt the awkwardness and delicacy of her position in still continuing to live practically on his charity; but Lyttelton quickly divined what was in her mind, and proposed to her that she should give him lessons in Sanskrit, which he was then learning from a munshi who was far from satisfactory, though he was paying him twenty rupees a month. In fact, he persuaded her into the belief that she would greatly oblige him by becoming his Sanskrit tutor, and she then consented to it, though she remarked playfully that it was rather strange for a Brahmin, bound to dispense learning free, to take payment for it, and that too from one who had saved her life twice at the risk of his own. She vowed that she would repay every pie of it with interest, as soon as her suit succeeded and she became rich. So she was now teaching him Sanskrit for two or three hours daily, incidentally picking up English herself. Save for these hours, they rarely met each other.

The Amatya purposely refrained from informing his son Madhava Rao of what was transpiring in Tanjore, but the latter heard grossly distorted and exaggerated rumours of his uncle's death and what ensued, and later on of his father's dismissal from office. He then returned to Tanjore of his own accord, led thereto by the conflicting accounts which some of his friends sent him in reply to his inquiries. His father and Kamala Bai however, combined to mislead him, and he was not able to learn the whole truth. He was very eager to see Clavirunda again, if only to learn whether her mind was deranged and whether she was living with the Englishman, as he was told. His passion was also still strong, though the latter charge against her disgusted him, and at times made him almost long to shoot the Englishman. He was however, afraid that his visiting her would displease his father, and that she might refuse to see him, that the Englishman might

prohibit it. Unable to bear the suspense any longer, and tormented by his passion, he at last decided to seek an interview with her, when the Englishman happened to be out. But as ill-luck would have it, on the very day selected by him, his rich, young girl-wife fell into a well by accident, and was drowned. He felt but little grief for her death, as he hardly knew her; but her obsequies put off his intended visit for nearly a fortnight.

Though Madhava did not feel any sorrow for his wife's death, and was, if anything, only annoyed at its delaying the execution of his cherished wish, his father, strange to say, was much affected by it, and his daily cogitations grew more and more gloomy and anxious. As already stated, he had six sons; and if they divided the ancestral property on his death, as he and his late brother had done on their father's, the name and importance of the family would be seriously damaged. This was why he so ardently sought to increase the wealth of the family, as much as he could, by fair means or foul. He did not really expect to win the suit against his sister-in-law, backed up as she was by the Englishman. But he had expected a dowry worth at least a lakh of rupees with his rich daughter-in-law,[112] and this sudden blow to all his hopes in that direction greatly dejected him. His influential and lucrative office was gone already; and he heard that his enemies at Court were seeking to get his son dismissed from his charge at Pattukota. He could never remember a time when the reputation and influence of his ancient family were at a lower ebb, and he felt it all the more in that he was partly the cause of it. His brother, by marrying an heiress and adopting his son, had done all he could to gild and brighten the family escutcheon; for, to the Amatya, Worth and Wealth were synonymous, and Reputation and Power were the children of Mammon in his Pantheon. What had saved him, as well as the two women whose guilt was more patent, but whose conviction would

have inevitably implicated him too in the disgrace, but money? What was. the chief qualification of the Pradhan, a time-serving courtier, but his almost fabulous riches which made even the King indebted to him sometimes? Money begets power, money brings reputation, making that appear grand, noble and heroic in its possessor, which would have looked mean or ordinary in a poor man; there is no pleasure which money cannot buy, no punishment which it cannot avert. In fact, even the most heinous sins can be expiated by the man of money, if the priests are to be believed. Acting consistently on this principle, the Amatya regarded money-making as the end of life, and judged all things by their monetary value. He was therefore appalled when so many pecuniary calamities crowded upon him suddenly, and no new prospect of repairing the damage presented itself. There was no chance at all of his winning the suit and being allowed to retain Malayur; the Maharaja took a personal interest in it, and was unfavourably disposed towards him; besides, the Judge, an impractical man, had no true idea of the value of money. To give up what he was actually enjoying, and Malayur was no insignificant estate but almost equal to his own, was more than flesh and blood could bear, and he racked his brain to devise some means of retaining his hold on it. At last, he hit upon a plan which he had once before rejected deliberately. As is always the nature of the human mind in such circumstances, his ingenious mind at once invested it with a halo of respectability and buttressed it on all sides with a hundred advantages. He then sought his coadjutor Kamala Bai, as he needed her help, to discuss it with her. She was still living in his brother's house with a single servant, Kalyani Bai, his wife, Sona Bai, having firmly refused to allow her to live with them in their own house. On some pretext or other, he had not yet paid her even a rupee of her own money, so that she was entirely in his power still. Having settled with her the plan of action, he

returned home, and sent his son Madhava Rao to her, saying that she would speak to him of an important affair affecting the family. And her proposal, very adroitly made by subtle suggestion and insinuation, was no other than that he should see Clavirunda and persuade her to return home and live there in all comfort and happiness as his mistress. She drew a glowing picture of the happiness that awaited him: she pointed out how it was the only way to improve the declining fortunes of the family; she offered him permission in his father's name to resign his appointment which had meant exile from Tanjore; she assured him of success, because the girl still loved him passionately and had given up *sati* only in the hope of living happily with him eventually, thus tickling his vanity and inflaming his passion; and above all, she urged strongly that such a course alone could save the family-name from lasting ignominy, as Clavirunda's stay with the Englishman was already a crying scandal which would soon spread all over the kingdom, dragging in the mire the fair name of the ancient family, a disgrace alike to the memory of the dead and the reputation of the living. Madhava Rao listened, in surprise and gladness. That such a proposal should have his father's approval, seemed almost incredible. Was his father then so,———,no; he refused to look at that aspect of it altogether. He consented readily and cheerfully, for the sake of the family name and fortunes. While she gave him many hints and much valuable counsel as to how he should plead and persuade, Kamala Bai gloated inwardly on the prospect of reducing her enemy to her own degraded level.

CHAPTER IV

THE LOVERS MEET

"Did you hear, Bayee darling," exclaimed Sarada on her return from the bazaar one evening, "It seems your stepson's

wife, Sundari Bai, fell into the well and was drowned this morning. The bazaar is full of the news, and they say that it is a just retribution,—he sought to kill you for the sake of your dowry, and God has killed his own daughter-in-law instead and deprived him of her dowry too."

"I am so sorry to hear it; it is quite wrong to say so," replied Clavirunda, shocked by the suddenness of the news. "He is perhaps the one least affected by her death: there are her parents who have no other daughter and who loved her so much and there is her husband who must also feel it deeply. Poor Sundari was a quiet and simple girl! But is it no more than an accident?"

"Quite an accident, they say," replied Sarada. "It seems she went to the well in their backyard to draw water and fell into it while doing so; her pitcher was half-filled, and there was no one near by. There is no one like her amiable father-in-law, or Kamala Bai, in their house: it must have been an accident only."

"I am so very sorry to hear it," observed Clavirunda, "She must have loved her husband, and looked forward to a happy married life with him. I wonder how he would really feel when he learns of it at Pattukota?"

"He has come back and is here now; I saw him prowling about our compound on one or two occasions, but did not tell you, thinking it might frighten you unnecessarily. But what does he care? She was not a handsome enough girl for young master, who seems so partial to good looks in women that he does not even care how they may be related to him. There was a rumour sometime ago that he was keeping a beautiful nautch girl at Pattukota. I fancy he would take this as a piece of good luck, and soon wed someone more to his liking. The old one would be more hit by this accident, I am sure, for there are few girls in Tanjore who would bring so rich a dowry."

"I can't believe it—he must feel for his wife's untimely death," said Clavirunda reflectively.

The news, however, set her thinking. She had not confided her feelings towards Madhava Rao to any one, not even to Sarada; and during their conversation at the backyard on the day the latter was driven out of the house, the Amatya had come before Madhava had told the servant of his love for her mistress, or of its being returned by her. Sarada, therefore still looked upon Madhava Rao as a lascivious and unprincipled young gallant, and her mistress as an innocent victim whom he had attempted to outrage and thereby subjected to, a foul and false suspicion. Clavirunda felt that her heart was still partial to the young man, but it was not now the same as before. She had passed through fire not merely physically, but also mentally, and her daily association with Lyttelton for several hours, some of which at least were devoted to earnest conversation on subjects far more serious than the study of Sanskrit, had stimulated her naturally keen intellect, which had lain as it were dormant during her wedded life. In a few short weeks, her young and cultured mind had expanded on all sides, and she now faced life with a broader and nobler outlook. Lyttelton had clearly pointed out how most of the persecution and misery she was subjected to under her husband's roof, and even the conduct of Kamala Bai, Amatya & Co., were due to ignorance, to superstition, and to effete caste rules and customs, as much as to greed and selfishness. His pet idea was that in this world, "man's inhumanity to man made countless thousands mourn,"[113] and he traced this inhumanity to purblind ignorance and a narrow and defective realization of the earnestness of life and the gravity of its responsibilities. Imbued with such ideas, and realising vividly the depth and abundance of superstition and ignorance around her, she now dreamed fondly that, if only she could find a suitable partner in life to help her, she would devote the rest of her days "to

set the crooked straight"[114] and leave her little corner of the world brighter and happier than she had found it.

Would young Madhava Rao, whom her heart still loved, prove a fit helpmate? He was always credited with a romantic nature; he loved her passionately, and so she could easily imbue him with her own enthusiasm, even if he cherished no such noble aims of his own. But did he still love her as before? Why else did he come "prowling about the compound," as Sarada put it? Why had he not seen her yet? And when he saw her again, what would he think of the ugly scars that now deformed her? True, the scars on her legs were covered by her cloth which came to the ankles, and she now wore a jacket with long sleeves instead of the ordinary bodice, to hide the scars on her shoulders and a large and irregular cicatrice on her right forearm. But she would not hide her disfigurement, and deceive him. Would he mind it very much? Was there any truth in the rumour about the nautch-girl? She knew he loved music passionately, but was he so impure? Again, she was a widow now and he a widower; in fact Sundari's untimely death seemed so timely and providential, though she was ashamed to think of it that way. Would he agree to marry her? Her Babaji, most learned of men, had once told her that the *Shastras* provided for the remarriage of Brahmin widows and that there were authentic precedents for such remarriages[115] though the custom had latterly fallen into desuetude. Would he dare to break the present custom for her sake? It never struck her that, even if widow-remarriage were permitted to her caste, the world would not allow a widowed step-mother to marry her step-son. She always regarded hers as no marriage at all in the eyes of a just God, and herself as an outraged maiden, kept by force in a state of married slavery for some years; so this view and objection never entered her mind. She did not even for a moment entertain the idea now of living with him illicitly; that would indeed be a novel way of beginning to

regenerate others! Would he boldly marry her, or rather prefer "some one more to his liking"? Her mirror showed her that her face was still superbly beautiful, more beautiful than it ever was before, beaming with the radiance of a new intelligence and a nobler outlook. But her disfigured body, and relentless castiron custom, would he rise above those considerations? Was his passion for her purely sensual, or had it a deeper and a more substantial foundation? She felt that if he could not rise above such considerations, he was not fit to be her new life's helpmate, and so she began to desire an interview with him.

She was therefore glad and excited when he came to the bungalow one evening of his own accord and asked to see her. She, however, deemed it only right to consult her protector, before seeing her chief enemy's son, and sought his permission. She had never told Lyttelton anything about Madhava Rao, or of their mutual feelings. He seemed to hesitate at first and apprehend danger; but when she assured him that the son was a very different man to his father, that she feared no harm at his hands, he felt he had no right to interfere with her own discretion and freedom, and allowed it, contenting himself with remaining on the alert in his own room.

When Madhava Rao entered, her heart beat violently, and he too looked shy and uneasy, and stared at her beautiful face and looked down abashed. She asked him to be seated, and then condoled with him on his wife's death.

"Who told you of that?" asked he, almost in a pleasant tone she thought, and with a naive unconcern which seemed to justify her servant's prediction rather than her own.

"Sarada told me the very day it happened,' she replied, "and I felt so sorry. Her parents have no other daughter and were so fond of her."

"Yes, that is true," he rejoined, as if he had never thought

of it before.

"When did you return from Pattukota?" she asked.

"As soon as I heard of my father's dismissal from Court," replied he, quickly. "I heard all sorts of rumours, and I was so anxious and alarmed, mostly on your account;" he added shyly. "And that reminds me," he continued. "We are so very sorry for what has happened: and I am very glad you have safely come out of the trap set for you by Kamala Bai. My father specially enjoined me, just as I was coming out to see you, to assure you that he was wholly misled by Kamala Bai: he believed to the last moment you were a willing *sati*. He told me more than once to assure you of this."

"So he knows of this visit?" asked she curiously, and the question seemed to nonplus her lover.

"Yes, he knows," he replied after some hesitation.

"Did he send you solely to tell me this?"

"No, he did not send me; I was so eager to see you myself and learning of it, he sent this message through me."

"But how did he learn of it? Did you tell any one else about it and of this visit?

This cross-examination disconcerted the young man extremely, and in his attempt to get out of it, he blundered still more:

"He learnt of it somehow; but tell me, is it true that you are living with this Englishman?"

She was too innocent to understand him rightly at once, and replied: "I live in this cottage with Sarada, and he lives in that bungalow, I don't eat at his table or live under the same roof with him."

"I do not mean that;" said he, encouraged by her innocence. "Do you live with him, under his protection, as

his mistress?" The moment the words escaped his lips, he felt ashamed and confused, and would have given much to take them back, if possible. Her face flushed, her brows knit together in indignation at the insult, and her eyes seemed to flash. But she soon overcame the feeling, and asked calmly, though with an effort and apparent reluctance: "Is it,—is it true that you keep a nautch-girl at Pattukotta?"

'No, it is utterly false; it is a base lie," he replied vehemently.

"So is this too."

"I thought so; I could not believe it for a moment even; and that too with a *Feringhi*!" he said warmly.

"Would it make much difference if he were one of us?"

"No, but still,"—he was perplexed for a suitable reply. "You see he is a mlechha and a Christian,"[116] he continued after a while, seeing that she expected an explanation, "and I could not believe in it, when I first heard the rumour. It was so absurd; but was eager to learn the truth from your own lips, on account of my love for you."

"Do you love me still?" she asked, with a tremor in her voice, her eyes shyly fixed on the ground.

"Love you? I adore you, and my passion can never, never wane; that is why I don't feel for my wife's death at all. Where is there another woman so beautiful in all this kingdom? And I have loved you always, even from your wedding-day on which I first set my eyes on you and began to curse astrology for depriving me of such a jewel. This love, and the hope of its being crowned with success some day, have been my only solace in my exile. Can I ever forget those burning kisses, or look upon another woman after that blissful experience? It is all a lie about the nautch-girl; she sings well and so I had two music-parties in my house, and they have trumped up this scandal out of it. Kamala Bai too

asked me about it, but it is quite false. My life's happiness is in your hands, and I have come seeking it now. You may believe in such a rumour when they are able to connect it with any woman more beautiful than yourself; but there is no such woman, and so I shall always love you and you alone for evermore, even as I do now, even as I did on the very day I first saw you. And I implore you, if you have any love for me, as I have believed ever since I saw you near the well, if you have any pity for me, do not keep me in this torturing suspense any longer, but come away with me even this moment and let us live together, utterly unmindful of what others may think or say, in such supreme bliss as never fell to the lot of any other man and woman in this world. Beauty such as yours was never seen before, nor love such as I feel for you, drinking in, as I do, that beauty, with an insatiable thirst, and wishing that I had a thousand eyes like Indra."[117]

She did not interrupt him, but sat there, silently looking on the ground, bashfully at first, almost thoughtfully as he went on with his passionate declamation, and even for some minutes after it was over and he awaited her reply. When our fond dream of any one greatly beloved, is suddenly shattered, and the glory and halo which our imagination has lovingly shed round our darling "fades into the light of common day,"[118] the sad disillusionment vexes us not merely by baulking our heart of its long-cherished desire and hope, but also by deeply wounding our vanity in ruthlessly exposing the fallibility of our understanding. Our heroine felt that she could never forget the bitterness of those few minutes. Endowed with a keen and virile intellect, the hero of her fancies had never been half so gross or sensual; the recent enlargement of her mind and change of attitude towards life had taken place almost unconsciously, so that she failed to remember that her lover had gone through no such experience. She only felt that the golden idol she had

set up in her heart, on being disrobed and divested of its fine and imposing trappings, proved to be made only of common brick and mortar, well plastered over and painted; and the shock of this sudden disclosure seemed to stun her. At last, she said slowly and in a tone of assumed indifference, "But I am not beautiful any longer; I am disfigured by so many scars;" and she showed him the scars on her legs and the cicatrice on her right forearm, drawing up the sleeve for the purpose; "and I have more on both my shoulders." She had however, little doubt now about the result.

"Is it so? No one told me;" he said in reply, and looked at the scars curiously. He was visibly shocked. His face fell, and his looks plainly betrayed the feeling uppermost in his mind. No word was needed to show that he was deeply disappointed; that he felt no remorse, or even pity, for what his own father had, with the meanest of motives, brought down cruelly upon the innocent and helpless girl, whom he professed a few minutes before to love so passionately and extraordinarily; that his shock was rather that of the artist when he sees for the first time, a painting of some master daubed with a tar-brush by some mischievous vandal. He who knew more than any other mortal,[119] and as if by super-human insight, the inmost recesses and crevices of the human heart, its alleys and by-paths as well as its highways, has affirmed, risking the worth of all he ever wrote on that single statement, that

"Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds;"

and Clavirunda now saw too clearly that neither her lover's sensual passion for her, nor even her own for him, based on the delusion that she saw as his visage, was the true love.

"You are badly burnt, curse that wretched woman Kamala Bai!" exclaimed he at last, finding his tongue with no little difficulty, "but your face is still beautiful, thank God!

And, of course, I love you still, and so much. Come away with me." He added after a pause.

"Do you think you still love me enough, after seeing how badly I am disfigured, enough to marry me?"

"Marry you? Why, are you not a widow? Whoever talked of marriage? Has your brain really been affected as they told me?"

"Then what did you expect, and what did you mean when you wanted me to go away with you and live happily? Did you want me to live with you as your mistress, as Kamala Bai and your uncle lived together to the scandal of the whole kingdom?"

"Kamala Bai is a wicked woman and she and my uncle lived together so openly and shamelessly;" he replied, "but you are so good and so beautiful yet,—I could kill her for it,—and I love you so much And you will just return to your own home and live there as a widow, and I may even wed some girl again, just to ward off suspicion and scandal, and no one need know anything of our love and our happiness which we can easily keep secret from the eyes of the world; in fact, our relationship as step-mother and step-son would prevent suspicion. Our case will be quite different,"

This shameless proposal, made so deliberately in cold blood, was to Clavirunda like a blow on the face. But she again controlled herself with an effort, perhaps for the first time conscious of having unwarrantedly expected too high an ideal of one who had been all his life brought up in such traditions and customs, and replied calmly:

"I do not think that either my beauty, or your love, or our relationship, or secrecy, would at all alter my position, or make me less wicked than Kamala Bai, if I did as you wish me to do. I rather think, on the other hand, that once I fall so low, I too may be tempted into worse sin and cruelty, and even seek to ruin your wedded wife out of jealousy. I

am not like Kamala Bai; you have grossly mistaken me by thinking so; and God alone can know how pained I feel to find that I too have been mistaken in you. But perhaps you are not entirely to blame, and you act thus because you know no better. You say you love me still; and in my heart of hearts my dream too still persists, perhaps, or I would not thus talk to you after the insult you have just now offered. I am a widow and you are a widower. My grand-father, who was the most erudite man of his age, has told me that Brahmin widows did remarry sometimes in former ages, though it is not the custom now. And we will break the custom now, but not for the mere sensual gratification of a lust of the flesh, nor because my face is still beautiful, nor because I find yours so. Such love, based on mere physical beauty, must necessarily decay with time, or change for other greater beauty, soon or late. This life of ours is not meant for such amusement and pleasure alone. Look around you with observant eyes, and you will find so much of misery and distress caused by ignorance and bigotry, and all quite avoidable. These ugly scars of mine which have so suddenly cooled the burning passion within you, I now regard as the seals God has set on me to remind me throughout life and constantly of my duty[120] towards my purblind fellow-beings, even such persons as Kamala Bai and Kalyani. But I am still young, ignorant in the ways of the world; and I can never hope to fight these evils and lighten the misery of even a few of the suffering thousands within this town, without a strong, willing and able helpmate. If therefore you really love me still, and are willing to devote your life to a task at once heroic and noble, break this unjust and cruel custom, even as the first step in our holy endeavour to better our society, and marry me; and then, by God's blessing, we shall not only be happy in our mutual love, untarnished by any sense of humiliation or sin, but also strive our utmost to make the lives of our ignorant and less fortunate brothers and sisters

nobler, brighter, and happier than now. It is a task certainly worthy any man's ambition, and when crowned with success, it will be a gift which no lover need be ashamed to present to his sweet-heart. No young woman, perhaps, ever before spoke in this manner to any young man, but it is no little or common ambition that impels me to do so. Take time to think over it if you like, and come to me again when you have made up your mind."

"Whoever heard of a Brahmin widow remarrying!" he exclaimed again in a tone of incredulous astonishment. "The Maravas and the Shanars have such customs; but among the twice-born,—it is simply ludicrous, and I cannot help thinking now that my father and Kamala Bai were right when they said that the shock has affected your brain. Or perhaps, that Englishman has put these *mlechha* ideas into your head."

"Does it not strike you that the Marava, Shanar and *mlechha* idea of a widow remarrying and living happily and honourably with her husband is purer, juster and nobler than the twice-born idea of her living in shame and sin with another man, or as sometimes happens, with many men, or even wasting her life in lonely pining and misery? Will you not remarry? Did not your uncle remarry when he was nearly fifty, and do not even older men remarry when young girls?"

"But our *shastras* and custom allow it for men; we want our women to be purer."

"Is it just, or does it even keep the women purer always? Has any one, ancient or modern, saint, sage or sinner, any right to decree one sex alone to such a doom and allow the utmost license to the other? God counts the tears of the weak and the helpless in this world, and if we are gradually sinking as a race and giving place to the Moghul and the foreigner,[121] it is no more than a just retribution for the oppression of the weak by the strong among us. And if the Mohamedans and the Feringhis gain ground day by day, it is because they

have no such unjust and inhuman customs and caste-rules. For, if there is a God above, justice and righteousness alone can exalt a nation, not injustice, not cruelty, not bigotry, not the inhuman oppression of the weak by the strong. And I just wish you to help me to fight these evil customs and traditions which darken and embitter our daily life and slowly sap our racial vitality. Do you not see it is well worth a life's endeavour?" Her face was aglow with unconscious enthusiasm, and Madhava Rao could not but gaze on its bewitching beauty and deem it well worth his endeavour. But her words only seemed to confirm his suspicion that her mind was partly deranged.

"How can I marry you? It is preposterous; it is impossible, and you know it. Do be reasonable, if you really have any love for me, and put an end at once to this scandalous life with a *mlechha*,—come away with me to our house and save the family-name from further disgrace."

"The family escutcheon need fear no stain from me," said she rising. "I hoped against hope, but it is in vain."

"Shall I come again to-morrow, or next week?" said he eagerly, also rising from his seat, and gazing on her earnestly. "Won't you be reasonable? I love you so much still, and we feel the disgrace so keenly my father and I; the whole town is laughing at us already. My father will even restore your *stridhana* estate at once and you can enjoy it as you please all your lifetime. Do be reasonable, I beseech you, and leave this *mlechha* roof and come away with me, and we will live happily together. I will not marry another girl, if you don't wish it."

"Never;" she said bitterly and emphatically. "Your father sought to kill my body for the sake of my estate, and you now seek to kill my body and soul together for your own sensual pleasure, and also perhaps for the same reason, to judge by his instructions to you. If I fail in my suit to obtain

what is my own, I will rather beg in the streets, than lead such a life with you in luxury and ease. Pray, insult me no further."

He hesitated a little as if he wished to say, or rather would do something more, but a glance at her eyes made him think better of it and he slunk away.

After going a few yards, he came back, and standing at the threshold of her room, asked curiously, "How do you live? Does Narahari Rao still get you your food?"

"No," she replied coldly and impatiently. "It was troubling him too much, and I did not like it. Sarada brings the water and cooks for me; sometimes I do the cooking myself."

"But Sarada is a *sudra!*" he exclaimed in astonishment. "How could you ever reconcile your mind to it?"

"She is better than a thousand Kamala Bai's and Kalyani Bai's," said Clavirunda scornfully, "and I see nothing wrong to reconcile my mind to in it. Pray trouble yourself no further about me and my *mlechha* ideas; leave me alone."

And he went away finally, shocked and wondering more than ever whether she was insane, or had become a *mlechha* like her protector and was really living illicitly with him.

CHAPTER V

TUTOR AND PUPIL

No sooner was he gone, than she bolted the door, and falling down on her bed wept bitterly and long. Tears are indeed a divine gift and blessing and relieve the pent-up heart as nothing else can; and they are the only solace of many a lonely and despondent bosom in this perplexing world.

On returning from the bazar that evening, Sarada found her mistress in brown study, her beautiful eyes swollen with weeping. Finding her in no mood to explain, she wisely kept

quiet, and sought to please and divert her in a hundred little ways known only to a woman's instinct and with a woman's tact. Clavirunda did not meet Lyttelton as usual that evening, as she had a headache. Her spirits revived a little next morning, though 'clouds of nameless trouble had crossed all night below her darkened eyes,'[121] and her heart still ached with the pain of a sweet and long-cherished hope rudely uprooted. When she met him, Lyttelton made no reference to the interview beyond expressing a hope that it passed off well and kindly inquiring about her indisposition. His delicacy touched her deeply, and she felt greatly relieved at not having to explain it all to him; but there was no other conversation, and the lessons were strictly confined to the texts, that day. Though Lyttelton refrained from probing her wound, she could not hide her feelings from him. He guessed that the sudden change was somehow connected with the visit of the Amatya's son, and sought to soothe her gently and quietly.

We have already indicated the nature of the conversation which they sometimes had, when they met ostensibly for studying a dead language. He had till then deliberately endeavoured to widen her mental outlook and to interest her intellect, which he soon found was of a rare and high order, in subjects of vital and practical importance on which she had never thought before; but he had never forced his own religious beliefs on her. He had found out that she had no definite religious beliefs: that she had many advanced and unconventional opinions regarding the traditions and customs of her caste; that she was quite unlike any other Hindu, man or woman, he had ever come across; and that her mind was daring and original, and highly emotional.

He now began to dilate little by little, on the practical aspects of Christianity,[123] its message of hope and happiness to the weary and the afflicted in heart; the infinite sympathy and healing kindness of the Son of God, who, as a mortal,

sought out the meanest and most miserable of his fellow beings to soothe and comfort them with the balm of His divine love. He knew that Christianity, as a philosophy, as a rational explanation of life and its problems, was weak on all sides, and could not satisfy a keen intellect like hers. But it differed markedly from other creeds in one point; it had a special message to the miserable and the unfortunate in life; no cold and relentlessly calculating dogma referring them back to their own sins in the unknown past and reiterating the inevitability of cause and effect and the impossibility of over-leaping it except by patient submission and resigned suffering, but a message full of comfort and hope and the promise of happiness. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden..... Your heart shall rejoice, and your Joy no man take from you." "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."[124] He began to expatiate earnestly on these texts and to depict to her in glowing words the white flower of a life which Christ led on earth, with its divine fragrance of infinite compassion and love for suffering humanity. Her weary and despondent heart was gradually attracted and captivated by this novel message and this noble picture of a suffering God, who did not marry and beget children or fight and kill wicked people even as a human hero, but who yet felt for the misery of the world to the inmost core of His being and sought to soothe and save with no force but that of sympathy, love and self-sacrifice. It was a noble message and a beautiful life, which appealed forcibly to her vivid imagination. Lyttelton carefully refrained from challenging her intellect or appealing to her reason; nor did he lay much stress on the divinity of Christ and the doctrinal aspect of the religion, which one has to "embrace by faith and faith alone." When he did appeal to her judgement, it was solely to point out

the difference between the Christian doctrine of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood and complete equality of all men in His eyes, from the meanest to the highest, the weak, the helpless and the unfortunate, being, if anything. He specially favoured children, and the Hindu caste-system which made birth the sole test of a man's worth and even nearness to salvation, seemed to have for its one object the oppression of the weak by the strong. He had already dwelt on the apparent injustice of the caste-system during their discussions; and her willingness to live and eat with Sarada was partly owing to her concurrence with his views. The contrast drawn by him between the two creeds, the one clannish and autocratic, the other absolutely democratic, served to incline her favourably towards the latter and endowed it with a rational basis to her mind. Lyttelton also pointed out, after sometime, that the idea of an *avatar* of God coming to save His erring and sinful children was quite familiar to Hinduism too; and he asked her to consider whether an *avatar* who preached and practised humility and martyrdom based on implicit faith in God and who advised his followers to show the left cheek to one who struck them on the right, was not likely to be the true incarnation of an all-merciful God.

After she had thus imbibed gradually of much of the spirit of Christianity, he suggested prayer to her, to soothe her mind and bring her nearer to God. Clavirunda had never before prayed deliberately, or regularly, though her heart, with its heavy burden of sorrow and pain, had often unconsciously gone up to its Maker for help and strength. Asked to give her opinion of the value of prayer, she would probably have said:

"I am as all these men

Who cry upon their gods and are not heard,

Or are not heeded... ... ...

Perchance the gods have need of help themselves,
Being so feeble that when sad lips cry
They cannot save!"[125]

But now, she readily agreed, and they sometimes prayed together for help, strength and guidance; and she also prayed, as desired by him, on waking every morning and before retiring for the night. While prayer is possible only in some particular states of the mind, and perhaps not at all to some natures, it has great, an almost miraculous effect on its sincere and faithful devotees, and Clavirunda soon experienced it. Her troubled heart began to fill with an unknown peace, and she felt a strange satisfaction and elation of spirits after every act of prayer. Her gratitude to Lyttelton was now deeper and fuller than ever, and his own noble and pure life, of duty quietly done to the best of his lights; readiness to risk even his life to help a fellow-being in distress; of discriminating and unostentatious charity; of active and conscientious righteousness and cheerful resignation to the divine will whenever he failed in anything, seemed to her as a shining example of the new ideal,[126] so different in theory as well as in practical result to her own religion. Lyttelton was the only Christian she knew, and he was a veritable saint and hero in her eyes; even her own grand-father, who had disliked all foreigners as such, had liked him much. On the other hand, she could count at least a dozen scoundrels, wicked in every way and disgraceful to humanity, who passed for honourable and orthodox Hindus. Her own brother-in-law, the Amatya, was an honoured and trusted minister till recently, and one of the leaders of society in the Kingdom, and his dismissal from court was due more to the King's personal prejudice than to his conduct towards her. Reasoning in this manner, and subtly influenced day by day by Lyttelton's conversation, she soon lost the little hold she had on her native religion and grew in Christian faith and

meekness. Having always been more sinned against than sinning, there was no occasion for any soul-stirring repentance, or struggle against vice or sin in her case;[127] her daily communion with God in prayer gave her a restful peace and a quiet joy, and her intellect ceased to hanker even for the regeneration of others which was its burning ambition a few weeks before. Nor was this change in her mental attitude in the least distressing. To be guided by her noble deliverer and protector and learn the great truths of a new religion from him, was at once delightful to her heart and to her understanding. Deep gratitude and admiration made her like him more than she had liked any other man excepting her grandfather. She could not have liked him more had he been her own elder brother; and he, he always behaved towards her with a kindness, chivalry and tender solicitude which were indeed very pleasing to her. She looked up to him with the grateful gladness and joy of the lotus towards the rising sun, and he showed towards her the sunbeam's lightness and delicacy of touch and feeling, when it gently unfolds the soft and fragrant petals of the blossoming flower and fills its inmost recesses with a new life and light on a golden morning.

CHAPTER VI

LYTTELTON TELLS A STORY

But it was not always peace and joy.

She won her suit and obtained possession of Malayur together with some money, the income from the village since her husband's death. She insisted on it, and repaid Lyttelton out of this sum all that she had ever received from him. Lyttelton then playfully refused to take lessons from her free, and proposed to teach her English in return, to which she gladly agreed; and so they were instructing each other now and spending more time together than before. The investment

of her recovered estate in charities, in pursuance of her grandfather's last wishes, engaged her attention for some months, and Lyttelton helped her in the task, ably and willingly. A *Chuttram* for feeding freely all poor travellers and infirm persons irrespective of caste, and a free Sanskrit *patasala* with an establishment for boarding and lodging 108 scholars, were founded; and a number of wells were also sunk in places where drinking water was scarce. To supervise the management of these charities, five suitable trustees were duly appointed, including herself and Lyttelton, and there was a small monthly provision for her own maintenance made in the trust.[128]

When these affairs had been settled finally, she again began to feel uneasy in mind. She had originally intended to manage the charites herself, but this appeared inadvisable for many reasons, and so she had made a final settlement. Unpleasant echoes of the public slander at her living in the same compound with the Englishman sometimes reached her ears through the thoughtlessness of Sarada, and she too began to feel the awkwardness of her position. She interested herself in the domestic and spiritual affairs of the Christian families at Tanjore,—the only persons outside her compound who did not consider her a fallen apostate and a social pariah now: but they were so very few that she had still much of her time hanging heavily on her hands. Her heart often felt a vague emptiness, and hankered after something nameless and indefinite, and she sometimes found herself in a gloomy and despondent mood. She prayed fervently on such occasions and it relieved her, but only for the time. The mood, and the haunting sense of something lacking, some place void within her heart, soon returned and made her uneasy. She thought again of occupying herself in the active management of the charities, or of going on a journey; but the few hours she spent in study and conversation with Lyttelton daily were too sweet, too dear, to be so easily abandoned, and she felt

dimly that it was not merely the intellectual pleasure, or the spiritual enlightenment and comfort, which so endeared them to her. Though she was latterly very free and open with him, and had made him almost 'her father-confessor', she somehow refrained from telling him of this new unrest in her mind, this nameless hunger in her heart. Was it due to shyness? And why did she feel shy with him about it? She could not explain this to herself clearly; she only knew that, somehow, she wished to hide it from him. He had told her nothing about himself and she had not asked. She knew only that he was an officer of the English Company, stationed at Tanjore; also that he was a brave, noble and good man who had saved her life twice and helped her more than any other man or woman living.

And Lyttelton? There was something in his heart too which, despite her efforts, made it easy for him to feel the least movement or change within hers. He noticed with joy that the seed had fallen within her heart at last and he eagerly waited for it to sprout and grow and send down strong and sustaining roots deep into her being, so that the young tree above ground may support a stout and upright trunk able to bear its glorious crown of leaf and flowers and fruit in any storm or stress of weather. He noted it gladly and tended and nurtured it carefully, with a young mother's care and gladness for her first-born. But he too was not without dark misgivings and fears, nor could he predict the future of the tender sapling.

They were reading together one evening as usual, and something in the text turned the conversation on the tragedy of life and the inscrutability of the Divine Will. "It seems all a puzzle sometimes, and we seem to grope blindly, blundering and stumbling at every step," she remarked sadly. "A little more light in this dark world, surely God could give us that."

"And He will and does, when we seek it rightly," he replied in a soft and tender voice. "Trust in God and do the right" is the Christian's motto, and when we do the duty which lies nearest to us, we find that God has already made plain our next duty. What more do we really want here and why should we worry ourselves about the ultimate goal, and even what may lie beyond our present duty? A trusting and loving heart, that humbly and patiently submits to the inevitable and gladly and thankfully accepts God's blessings, is a precious jewel to its possessor. But why, why do you cry, my darling,—I beg your pardon, I mean—I can't bear to see those tears; tell me freely what ails you and makes you weep so."

She dried her tears and controlled herself with an apparent effort, and then said after a while still choking with feeling: "I don't myself know well, but I have been unhappy for some weeks now, and it is getting worse day by day, and unbearable. I feel so wretched, and even prayer does not relieve me now. O! Why was I ever born?" and she again burst into tears.

"I pray you do control yourself," he said with great concern and earnestness, placing his hand upon hers in an involuntary caress across the table; "I am sure you won't cry so, if you know how the sight of those tears rends my heart. Do listen to the story I shall tell you now. and you will not perhaps then think yourself alone so unfortunate. Are you ready? May I tell you the story I have been long wishing that you should hear?"

"Yes," she replied faintly, gently withdrawing her hand, though his touch stirred her strangely.

"There was once a countryman of mine," continued Lyttelton, "who was the favourite child of his parents as a boy, especially of his mother, whom he almost worshipped as the highest ideal of womanhood. His father, a fairly rich

man, gave his son the best education available. This boy, the third and last son,[129] was specially brilliant at school. His parents entertained the highest hopes of him, and wished him to enter the clerical profession and succeed to a rich vicarage which was in the father's gift. Soon after entering the University, and while yet an undergraduate, the youth happened to visit a friend of his during the holidays at a pleasant seaside-town. There he met a girl, about his own age, with whom he fell in love at first sight. She appeared to him to be the embodiment of all his romantic dreams and fancies about womanhood, and her company thrilled him with almost an agony of delight. They met frequently, and she too professed to love him, and soon yielded to the fervour and violence of his passion. In the innocence of his heart, he attributed her easy complaisance to the sincerity and rapture of her love; and within a week of their first meeting, they were irrevocably united together in wedlock by one of the disreputable priests who infest our ports and derive a lucrative trade by uniting wandering sailors to scheming and shameless women. The young man then wrote to his parents, informing them of what he had done and giving a glowing account of the beauty and virtuous qualities of his bride. The astonished parents hastened to the scene and were far from satisfied about their new daughter-in-law, on inquiries made by themselves. They then besought him to leave her, offering to provide for her maintenance adequately; but he refused, and for the first time in his life, wounded the loving hearts of his dear parents by deliberate disobedience. His father, who was a highly honourable man with very severe ideas of paternal authority, was enraged at what he called the blind obstinacy of his son and then and there solemnly disavowed his kinship and washed his hands of him altogether. Infatuated love buoyed up the young man's heart for a short time, but he was soon at his wit's end to support himself and his young wife whose tastes and habits were as

extravagant as her beauty was bewitching."

"If he loved her so much and his father was rich, could he not claim his portion of the family property?" demanded Clavirunda, who had listened to the story with growing interest.

"We follow the law of primogeniture, which is not like the Hindu Law by which all the sons have a share in the ancestral property," replied Lyttelton, "and as I said, I,—I mean this young man was the third son and had no right to even a farthing. His mother and sisters at first sent him a little now and then on the sly, out of their own pocket-money. Looking about for ways and means of earning his livelihood somehow, he besought his young wife to be more thrifty, and to look for happiness in his abounding love and affection rather than in luxuries which they could ill afford. But it was in vain, and to cut the story short and not dwell on bitter memories, he soon found that his parents were right and that the girl had pretended to love him solely in the expectation of a rich husband. Soon she began to treat him coldly and even cruelly, notwithstanding his great love for her; she told him roundly that she would leave him if only he would secure her the allowance first promised by his parents. This drove him almost to madness, and he more than once thought of putting an end to his wretched life. Meanwhile, his beautiful and ideal wife took to drink, that curse of the West; and soon he had reasons to suspect even worse. Borne down by shame and remorse, the young man endeavoured to save her whom his heart still loved a little and pitied even more, but in vain; and so he betook himself to a remote exile in a foreign land, with blank despair in his heart, and utterly sick of life even before he had passed his teens."

"Why did he not return to his parents, who would certainly have forgiven him ?" asked she wistfully. "He might

with their help, perhaps have succeeded better in saving her. He might perhaps have come to love and wed a worthier girl, even if she did not mend."

"Perhaps it was pride, perhaps it was fear of his stern father, but he did not dare to face his parents and his loving brothers and sisters again," replied he sadly; "and as for wedding a worthier girl, here too our laws are different, and bigamy is a penal offence among Christians."

"I cannot commend your law of primogeniture which attaches such a great importance to the sheer accident of birth, even more perhaps than our own caste-system does", she remarked; "but the law against bigamy seems indeed a just law, a humane law, though perhaps, as in this very case, it may prove harsh in some instances. But I am interrupting your story. How did the young man fare in his voluntary exile and what became of his unworthy wife?"

"She became a hopeless drunkard, and after leading a life of shame and sin for sometime, she became insane."[130]

"And he?"

"God has been more merciful unto him," replied Lyttelton in a deep and low tone which quivered with emotion and seemed surcharged with tears. "He first tried to forget the past by plunging into new activities, seeking and exposing himself freely in all enterprises of difficulty and danger, and he in a way managed to forget the past often in his new surroundings and life. But after some years, an event happened to him, which changed the whole course of his being and endowed his aimless life with a new purpose and a goal to attain. Where he had tili then been groping blindly, with the one object of forgetting the bitter past and its memories, he now saw everything permeated by a beautiful golden light, and he was so overpowered by the new joy in his heart, that the past soon slipped out of his mind altogether like a hazy dream. A man in the prime of

his life, he felt that he had not till then realised fully the blessing of life. Do not your olden stories relate that when one prays to the gods for some great boon, the gods first test one's sincerity and perseverance to the utmost and then only are pleased to grant one's prayer? Similarly, God tested this young man too and was apparently pleased with his penance; for he did not, like his brethren in exile, indulge in profligacy and pleasure, unmindful of the God of his fathers and thinking that he had no name or character to lose in such a remote land.[131] Shame and repentence were always in his heart, and the hermit-like life he led must have moved God to pity his lonely and sad lot, or He would not have enriched his life with such a precious and rare blessing. Can you guess what happened to him?"

The question was quite sudden, and he was looking her full in the face, with a tell-tale glow and joy in his own eyes. She looked up at him, but her eye could not bear his gaze, and she turned them to the ground abashed.

"Can you not guess?" he asked again, in a soft and almost beseeching tone.

"Perhaps he fell in love again," she answered, in a voice scarcely audible, still looking on the ground, and her heart was full of a strange but not unpleasant commotion.

"Yes," he fell in love again as you say," he replied, "but it was very different now, from the giddy, boyish love which had almost poisoned his life at the very spring. It was like a great and mighty river, such as you have in this country up in the North, arising out of the pure and lofty bosom of the snowy Himalayas and flowing towards the primeval ocean in its deep and full-flooded calm and strength, scattering all round untold blessing in its course; not the turbid, shallow, noisy cataract of his boyhood, caused by a sudden downpour from a summer-cloud and soon drunk up by the sandy waste. Yes, he loved again, but O, how different it was now! And

she he loved, though she was not one of his own race and was in some respects even the reverse of what he had been brought up to regard and prize as the ideal of womanhood, she was a veritable gem among women, a kohinoor worthy of adorning the mightiest crown on earth; and she too had been chastened by God through great suffering and was like a burnished jewel, brighter and purer for the chiselling by adversity. It pleased God to place such a jewel in his hands, and his new love was as pure as it was deep and strong and all the purer on account of the circumstances which made its fruition seem almost hopeless and impossible at first. But God never blesses in vain and His Providence is as inscrutable as it is all-powerful. This love was a blessing in itself and made him inexpressibly happy even when it was confined to his own bosom, with no hope of ever meeting with success. But when he learnt the great poet's words that "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin,"[132] that his happiness was not quite indifferent to her, what bliss could equal his and how fervently and gratefully he praised God for at last crowning his life with such a blessing!"

He paused, as if to watch the effect of his words. She was still looking at something else, not at him; but he could plainly perceive the light and joy in her eyes, the turbulent heaving of her bosom. He dared not speak any more and waited for her to speak first. After a while, and still avoiding his eyes: "But if he cannot marry again as you first said, how could their love bear fruit? But tell me, who is this you are telling me about?"[133] She now looked up at him, and he peered into her eyes as if to read his fate there.

It was plain to him, and he rushed out of the room in great agitation, and was gone.

CHAPTER VII

A WHITE LIE

In the verandah of one of the officers's quarters in the Trichinopoly cantonement,[134] Lyttelton was pacing up and down, with an alacrity which betokened considerable inward excitement. His friend, Shere Khan, now a cavalry officer in the Nawab's army, was lazily reclining on a cushioned lounge, with a hooka, by his side whose gurgling noise, as he inhaled the fragrant fumes, was as divine music unto his ears.

"You have done what is best in the circumstances and showed great presence of mind," the latter was saying, "Why do you then fret and worry yourself for not having been a fool? Plain truth is cruel, nay criminal in some cases, and this is clearly one such."

"Plain truth would certainly have shattered my hopes for ever and made me miserable for the rest of my life," replied Lyttelton, "but then, how long can I hope to hide it from her? I am not sure even now whether she has not an inkling of it. Of course, she must and she will believe whatever I tell her, such has been our relationship till now, and that is what worries me most—how can I deceive her?"

"There are lies and lies, even as there are truths and truths," replied Shere Khan with a shrug, "and I must say you are far too squeamish. Surely, the spirit counts more than the letter, and what I propose will be for the ultimate happiness of both. From what you say of her, she will have nothing to do with you unless by way of marriage."

"That is certain."

"Well then, what earthly good can the plain truth do to anybody under the circumstances, and who the dickens will ever be the worse for your silence? You say you will openly

marry her again, the moment you hear you are free to do so; and that must be enough to satisfy your own conscience. According to her wonderful caste rules she cannot marry at all now, having become a widow; but as she herself is willing, some such ceremony as I suggested will satisfy her, and you will both be happy, instead of pining away and wasting your lives, as plain truth would have you do."

"It will be a lie all the same, and how happy would I be if it were possible without it!" exclaimed Lyttelton regretfully.

"It is a lie, but one of the whitest I should say," rejoined. Shere Khan. "Did you not tell me once how, in one of your dramas, a white woman tells a lie with her dying breath to save her Moorish lover who kills her?[135] Yours will be even such a glorious lie, especially seeing how much you take it to heart. It is a noble sacrifice for true love's sake. I suppose it is the taint to old father Adam which makes perfect happiness here impossible. If you and I had the shaping of it, we would certainly order everything better; at least, so we think. But it is a stern fact that there is no rose here without a thorn, and one who wants the flower must not mind the pricks."

"You borrow your philosophy from the old tent-maker,"[136] replied Lyttelton, "and a pleasant and comfortable one it is too. But I who believe otherwise,—can't you see my predicament?'.

"I do only too well, my friend, and believe me, I am so very sorry for you," said Shere Khan in an earnest and kindly tone. "I hope you have never known me speak an untruth, or behave in a dishonourable manner; nor am I so dense as not to see your point. But in the peculiar circumstances of your case, I should not hesitate even a moment, if I were you. You mean no evil, nor are you doing any one any harm by this. If, for instance, there was any chance of your wife recovering and coming to live with you, I would be the first

to condemn this, that is, from your standpoint and moral code, though, the Prophet be praised! we have greater license."

"That is quite out of the cards," said Lyttelton, "and as I told you, I may hear the news of her death any moment."

"Well then, under the circumstances, and seeing how unnecessary and impossible it is for you to wait any longer, why should you hesitate or vex yourself so? Perhaps, your wife is dead already and the news is on its way to you."

"But when she learns the truth some day, what will she think of me? And how will God forgive me for such a falsehood?"

"I don't see how she can ever learn the truth unless you foolishly tell her," replied Shere Khan. "And even if you do so after your wife's death I think, that knowing your nature as she must, and loving you as you say she does, it will show her how deeply you really love her, to stoop even to such a course to win her and make her happy. And as for God's forgiveness, you have already condemned my philosophy, but I cannot help quoting the old tent-maker, as you call him, even though his words might sound somewhat profane. I think they embody much wisdom, at any rate they are quite just in this instance:

"Oh Thou, who man of baser Earth didst make
And who with Eden didst devise the Snake
For all the sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blackened, man's forgiveness give,—and take!"[137]

Lyttelton did not answer, and continued for some time pacing up and down lost in thought. Shere Khan quietly enjoyed his hooka, stroking his fine black beard and watching his friend's movements and face.

"Well, I shall take the leap," exclaimed Lyttelton,

stopping at last in front of his friend, with his arms crossed behind his back, "and there is perhaps no good to be done now any other way."

"Otherwise, it'll ruin her too;" put in Shere Khan. "Think of her case; your plain truth will be well-nigh as cruel for her as the snake-bite, or fire, from both of which you saved her. Fortunately, as I said, there is no priest now at Tanjore and no other European officer. I shall go over any time you like to bear witness to the ceremony, and you can exchange rings according to your custom and go through some form of make-believe marriage quietly."

"It must not be done in any Church; I cannot desecrate any temple of God with such an imposition," said Lyttelton, almost angrily.

"Certainly," replied Shere Khan, suppressing the smile that rose to his lips; "it may be done in your bungalow itself. She does not know anything of your marriage ritual, does she?"

"No," replied Lyttelton. "It strikes me," continued he after musing for a while, "that we can arrange it this way to her complete satisfaction. There is a small temple at Vallam over the spot where her grand-father lies buried: she is very fond of the place and has much faith in its holiness. The absence of a priest at Tanjore and her not having been formally baptised yet, might well serve as an excuse for the ceremony not taking place in a church, and she herself would very much like that the exchange of rings should take place before her grandfather's tomb. We three can quietly drive to Vallam one morning or evening and have done with it."

"Yes, that is just it;" exclaimed Shere Khan approvingly, "and I am at your service even this moment if you like. But, she may perhaps like to inform her own people?"

"Not she," replied Lyttelton. "Her people have cut her completely, and the whole of Tanjore honestly believes,

I think, that we are even now living together. Her servant Sarada is the only person who knows real facts; and she has no other law but what her mistress says and does."

"That makes it simple and easy then;" observed Shere Khan, "and let me now congratulate you most heartily on your final and sensible decision. You do know to profit by good company, as you say the great Pundit Rao once said to you."

CHAPTER VIII

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW

When after the formal exchange of rings and the completion of the novel ritual, Lyttelton kissed her for the first time, in front of her beloved grandfather's tomb. Our heroine was supremely proud and happy and wept for very joy. Shere Khan tendered his felicitations, and then rode away towards Trichinopoly, pleading some urgent military duty. Lyttelton and Clavirunda sat by the little temple, his arm about her, and she involuntarily nestled close to him and wept for joy. While seeking her hand, he had pleaded his love in passionate burning words which came direct from his heart and filled hers to overflowing with unutterable joy and pride She had at once learnt, as if by a flash of intuition, what it was she had been hungering for all along. She had then gently told him her own love, and gradually unburdened her whole heart to him including even the episode connected with Madhava Rao. Gratitude, such as no other human being perhaps owed to another, tended only to chasten and deepen her passion, even as her rare beauty and suffering enhanced his love for her. And now, when they sat together there as man and wife, in the lovely garden where she had spent the hitherto-happiest days of her life, and within a few yards of the mortal remains of him she had loved and revered most, her heart was full of a great peace and joy which she had

experienced never before. "I am sure he would have approved of this," she murmured gently, her eyes brimming with tears. "He was very fond of you and,—and he would not have denied me this happiness after all that I have endured. If I should die now, here on your heart, dearest, I should die quite happy and in peace. The happiness of this moment is enough to compensate for all the misery of my past life, and earth can hold nothing sweeter than this."

He said nothing in reply, but gently pressed her to his heart and kissed away her tears, murmuring, "CLARINDA![138] my love! my own!" He had already so changed her name, calling her his *'bright flower of the Ind'*, and also because Claribel was the name of his mother, his highest ideal of womanhood.

There was no happier couple in all that town, united in holy wedlock in the presence of the God of Fire, or even among those brought together by Cupid. Like the martial heroism of the Spartan mothers, the Swiss love of freedom, or Highland, loyalty, the devotion of the high-caste Hindu wife to her husband is a phase of life unique in the phenomena of human society. It is so self-less, whole-hearted, and impersonal that it has become the most favourite comparison of our poets and philosophers to denote the attitude of the devout human soul towards the Universal Soul or God. Other races, with a more sensual and worldly conception of the marriage union, can never realise the aptness and beauty of this simile, and must continue to regard such sacred hymns as profane, if not blasphemous. To the high-born Hindu wife, the intrinsic qualities of her lord have little to do with her own clear duty and deep devotion to him as a *pativrata*.[139] He is not merely her lord and master, but also her God, and she need know and worship no other, if only she discharges her wifely duties properly. This idea is openly inculcated by the moral codes and brought home forcibly to the minds of Hindu girls by

many an olden anecdote and story, so much so that some western writers have concluded that our religion denies that women have souls like men. The prohibition of remarriage and the extremely miserable lot of widows in general, together with the system of *sati* as long as it lasted, must have helped powerfully to bring about such an ideal of wifehood. Our forefathers were indeed supremely successful in systematizing certain things in life, and this matter of wifely devotion, so very comfortable and convenient to all husbands, that is, men, is one which may well compete for the palm of perfection.

Notwithstanding her unconventional opinions on many subjects, Clavirunda Bai, or Clarinda as we shall hereafter call her, as the descendant of an immemorial line of *pativratas*, had this instinct deeply ingrained in her nature; and but for the exceptional disadvantages and opposition she met with from the very beginning, she would have shown such devotion even towards her late husband, the Dewan. Now that deep love, admiration and gratitude, all impelled her in the way of her own wifely duties, she set about them with a whole-hearted assiduity and eagerness, and Lyttelton soon experienced what it was to have a loving and intelligent Brahmin lady as wife. She seemed to divine all his wishes by intuition the moment they were born in his mind and did her best to carry them out; she overcame most of the prejudices of caste and long habit which still clung to her, and took her own vegetarian food on the same table with him; she infused comfort and refinement into his bachelor life, and what was perhaps even more difficult than all these, she soon persuaded her servant Sarada to care for him almost as much and as sincerely as for herself. And her pure, glowing love illuminated all she did, even to the least act, and filled that simple, strange home with a rare joy and happiness. And he,—he responded in a manner fully worthy of her great love. His tenderness and solicitude for her were

more than that of a mother for her lateborn and only child. He sought and studied constantly to surround her with a wealth of affection: he decked her in pearls and gems, and no silk was too costly for her dress. Her heart overflowed, again and again with the very joy and pleasure of a life crowned with love, and she involuntarily poured forth her thanks-giving to the good and merciful God who had at last blessed her in such profusion. And when after a few years of such unalloyed happiness, she knew that their love was to bear fruit, her cup of bliss was full to overflowing.[140]

But this glad sunshine of their new life was not without its grim shadow, though she hardly suspected it. In the midst of his great joy and happiness, and especially when she chanced to show markedly her whole-hearted faith in him, his heart would feel a sudden pang of remorse and humiliation, and he would wish that she trusted and loved him less. His remorse would become so acute as to drive him to the verge of a confession, and then his fancies would begin to depict vividly before him how she would despise and perhaps hate him on learning the truth. Madhava Rao, of her own race and caste, who had admittedly won her youthful heart, she had rejected solely because he would not marry her, though she still loved him at the time, and though she forsook forever an apparently respectable and pleasant life among her own people, in fact, all that was so very dear to her from early association and habit. And such a girl, he had artfully deceived into a life of open concubinage with him, a middle-aged man of an altogether different race, taking a mean advantage of her gratitude for two accidental acts of mere humanity, and skilfully and shamelessly working upon her inexperienced mind and imposing upon her confidence. How did he ever come to stoop to something so inexpressibly base and dishonourable, or allow his clear conscience to be befooled and deluded by that sophistical will-of-the-wisp of a wily and godless epicurean? Come what might; he would

confess everything to her, even if he had to lose her for ever. Lose her? And all that glorious sunshine of love and happiness which had been unto his aimless and barren existence like light unto a blind man's eyes? He could not bear even to think of it. And his last letter from England promised him a speedy freedom, news of which might arrive any moment. He must somehow bear yet a while his secret load of sin and remorse, and then all would be well. He had done ill; but should he make it worse, when there was a near chance of making it all well, and safely too? His conscience indeed smote him heavily and frequently, but the hope of an early freedom to set everything right, again helped him to bear up, and he took great care to hide his secret load of sin and woe from the eyes of his beloved. But some times, he foolishly sought to drown his secret care and remorse in liquor, led thereto perhaps, by an ingrained hereditary tendency, though he was generally of abstentious habits and knew that a painful death by gout had carried away his father and his elder brother.[141]

CHAPTER IX

THE BUBBLE BURSTS

With the knowledge of the divine gift within her womb, there came to Clarinda a longing to be formally baptised and dubbed a Christian, before the birth of the child. She was now well up in the tenets of Christianity, and the *New Testament* and the *Pilgrim's Progress* were her favourite books in English, a language in which she had made great progress. She asked him to arrange for her early baptism, and so ardent was this desire in her that he dared not refuse to gratify it without arousing suspicion. But the absence of a competent priest at Tanjore served as an excuse to put it off for some time. When, however the great German Missionary, Christian Frederick Schwartz[142] who was then at the head of the English

branch of the S.P.C.K. at Trichinopoly, paid a visit to Tanjore shortly after (1771 A.D.), Lyttelton was obliged to yield to her pressing request. From what he had heard of Schwartz, he would have preferred any other priest for the purpose; but as he could allege no objection to him openly, he made up his mind to face the ordeal, hoping that the evangelist of a new religion in a far-off heathen country would not be too exacting or impractical. To prevent any awkward surprises, however, he thought it best to write the missionary a letter beforehand, briefly explaining the history of the applicant for baptism and his own connection with her, as well as his then inability to marry her according to the rites of the church, and his determination to do so as soon as he was free. After such an explanation, he apprehended no difficulty or danger, and so called on the Missionary the next morning with Clarinda.

Speaking of the latter half of the eighteenth century, the historian of *The Church in Madras* says:—"It is in many respects a dark period in the history of the Presidency: not only the ecclesiastical history, but the social history too. Thousands of vigorous full-blooded young men were exported to a country where vice is cheap and alcohol untaxed, without a religious guide to warn them of their dangers, and to. remind them of God's laws and their own Christian duty."[143] It was in fact, the time when one of the most pressing and difficult of our modern social problems first came into being. Unfortunately for Lyttelton the great German, whom Bishop Caldwell rightly extols as "not inferior to any missionary of any Church or society that ever lived, in simplicity and godly sincerity, in piety and devotedness, in wisdom, in philanthropy and zeal," was of an utterly uncompromising disposition. Schwartz considered it one of the most important and sacred of his duties to put down profligacy and sin however highly placed, and he was somewhat of a bigot in disowning altogether such of the

erring sheep among his flock as persisted in their error and refused to repent and walk in the straight and narrow path of righteousness. The learned Bishop himself says "that Schwartz's Christian discernment and his conscientious adherence to principle in the reception and baptism of converts, were such as to correspond with his high reputation for ministeral faithfulness, as compared with even the most respectable of his compeers and successors," and deservedly calls his "the most memorable name in the history of the Protestant Mission in Southern India." Schwartz had already heard of Lyttelton while at Trichinopoly, and had deeply regretted that a man who was otherwise reported to be so good and praiseworthy a Christian had fallen a victim to the charms of a heathen siren and was no better in that respect than most others of his countrymen, who led openly unclean and ungodly lives. His letter, therefore, which showed no knowledge of the heinousness and gravity of his sin, and referred to it merely as due to circumstances beyond his control which he meant to set right as soon he was free to do so, simply gave the priest a very low opinion of Lyttelton's character. Even Lyttelton's determination to marry Clarinda as soon as he could, to marry an Indian[144] and one born a heathen, somehow only jarred all the more on the European missionary's nerves. He determined for his part, to let the Englishman know plainly what he thought of it, and by no means to spare the heathen who had so bewitched a brother-European.

When Lyttelton entered the Missionary's small room next morning with Clarinda, and followed by Sarada who had, almost at the last moment, decided to embrace the new religion with her darling Bayee, holding that what was good enough for her and the good master was good for herself too, he found him sitting at a desk among his books and papers. Schwartz returned his greeting with a casual nod and without rising, —he had a book on his lap too, —and

he did not seem to notice Lyttelton's outstretched hand. He had not seen Clarinda who stood behind Lyttelton, and he looked curiously at Sarada's ample proportions and smiling homely face, which returned his gaze with a broad grin. Mistaking her for the bewitching wanton whom he had intended to castigate, he was almost ready to burst into laughter at the preordained failure of his intended lecture. He had nodded Lyttelton towards a chair, but he moved on to another, and placed it for Clarinda who quietly took it with a graceful bow towards the Missionary. On seeing Clarinda, however, Schwartz rose involuntarily, the book on his lap dropping to the ground. There was something in her beautiful face and in the quiet dignity of her bow which arrested his attention and commanded his courtesy, and he murmured an apology for not having noticed her earlier, as he picked up the book and resumed his seat. He now gazed on her in evident admiration; there was an awkward pause which the Missionary did not seem inclined to break, and so Lyttelton was obliged to speak first.

"I have not had the pleasure of your acquaintance before, Sir," said he in a tone which betokened anything but pleasure even then, "but I have heard of your good work at Trichinopoly, and before that at Tranquebar. So I am glad you have been able to spare some time to visit this town. This is the lady I wrote to you about, and I hope you will find her not ill instructed in the doctrines of our religion. I can vouch for her truly Christian spirit. She is eager to be formally baptised at your hands, so that she may become a Chrtstian in name also. She knows English and you may speak to her in that language, if you do not happen to understand Marathi or Hindustani well. That," he continued, as Schwartz turned his eyes towards Sarada, who was still standing near the threshold and staring alternately at a large German clock and a painting of David and the lions, that were on the wall, "is Sarada, her maid-servant. She too seeks

baptism with her mistress."

He ceased, and the words somehow sounded strangely and distantly in Clarinda's ears. The priest continued silent for a little while longer, and then turning to Lyttelton, he exclaimed with a thick German accent on his words: — "How dhare you thalk of the Christhan spirith and the Chrithian dhocthrines and bapthism thu me, living as you dhu in open and shameless adhulthery with this woman? Know you noth whath the Lord sayeth? 'And if the righth eye offends thee, pluck ith and casth ith from thee: for, ith is profithable for thee thath one of the members should perish and noth thath the whole bodhy should be casth intho hell.'[145] Have you readh that, and dhu you sthil lusth afther and live with this woman andh call yourself a Christhian?"

Clarinda could hear no more: with her eyes streaming with tears, she burst forth, interrupting the Missionary who was unconsciously working himself up to a passion.

"What do you mean sir, by thus insulting me and my husband, when I have come to you, a messenger of the Gospel, seeking the imprint of the seal of Christ? I am his true and wedded wife and he my husband, as Captain Shere Khan and this ring will surely prove, though we are not of the same race. But all men and women are the children of God who knows no distinction of race or colour, and we are as much man and wife in His eyes as you are a consecrated Minister of the Gospel?" And 'liquid lightnings' flashed out of her angry eyes, as she looked Schwartz full in the face, waiting for his explanation.

"Whath dhoes this mean, Sir?" demanded the Missionary, turning to Lyttelton, who was now sitting with his eyes on the ground and a violent commotion of anger, humiliation and remorse within his heart. "Your lether dhisthincthly confirms the rumour I have alreadhy heard of this connection. Have you then been dheludhing this poor

woman intho a false belief and adhded deceith thu your other heinous sin? Speak outh; you surely owe us both an explanation."

Clarinda was greatly surprised on hearing these words, and her heart almost stopped beating, awaiting Lyttelton's reply. She turned towards him, but his eyes were still fixed on the ground guiltily, and he dared not look at her.

"She would not consent otherwise, and I,—I loved her so much," he faltered out at last. "But I shall marry her again properly the moment I am free;" he continued more eagerly and hurriedly, "I have been expecting the news almost every moment. And the blame is wholly mine, as you can see that to this moment she is under the belief that the quaint ceremony we went through was a valid marriage rite which bound us together as man and wife. Mine be the sin and the shame then, and blame not her who was but an innocent victim of my deceit. I can say no more; and I beseech you, do not refuse her baptism on my account. She is indeed a true Christian, unworthy as I am even to say it, and she is not at all to blame in this affair. Even if she had erred with me in this willingly and knowingly, remember, Sir, that Rahab and Thamar[146] were among the progenitors of our Saviour in the flesh, and what our Lord Himself said to those who accused a woman who was taken in sin: 'he that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her'."[147]

"Thruly, the dhevil will quothe Scripture for his own purposes," replied the Missionary, "and I am noth therefore surprised ath your thrying thu dhefend your conducth in this manner. I am gladh thu see you are honesth enough thu thake the whole blame on your own shouldhers, though I cannoth help feeing pained thu nothe thath an ignoranth heathen woman showed a much higher sense of honour than you, a professed Christhian and a genthleman; and whath is far worse, thath you were so carried away by your lusthful passion as thu practhise deception thu desthroy her honour.

And I marvel ath your teaching her the principles of Christhianity and helping her thu seek bapthism. Your moral vision musth be very disthorthed indheed and your sense of Christhian dhuthy quithe ahead, thu allow you thu dhu all this. I pithy this poor dheludhed sinner from the bothom of my hearth and the only reparation you can now dhu her is thu leave her ath once and allow her thu leadh a blameless and pure life hereafter ath leasth. If she lives like thath in repenthance and goodh works, waxing more in humilithy and faith in the Redheemer, I may admith her inthu the fold lather on. And as for you, remember the words of the Scripture I have alreadhy quothed and thath ith shall noth profith even a lithtle whith if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul in the bargain. None of us children of Adham and Eve is withouth sin; buth remember also how the Lord dhismissed the sinning woman broughth thu judge before him: 'I thoo say unthu you, neither dhu I condhemn thee: go, and sin no more.'[148] Remember thath sin no more, and repenth and seek forgiveness while yeth there is time. Think noth thath I cannoth sympathise with you: I have heard of your pure and godly life before you formed this connection and I see thath yours is indheed a hardh case and thath you meanth well. She seems noth also one of the vulgar sorth, such as officers like you generally consorth with. Buth all these and thousandh andh one more considherations like these cannoth excuse your condhuct thuwards her, or consecrathe the blasphemous thravesthy of the marriage sacramenth with which you deceived her. The more I think of ith the less excuse I can findh for you. Go, and repenth, and sin no more, and may the Lord-forgive you!"

Lyttelton rose mechanically. His face was pale and his hands trembled visibly. He took two steps, and then stopped.. Turning to Clarinda, he said almost in a whisper: "Come, Clarinda, let us go."

But the priest heard him, and he thundered forth, rising

angrily; "Thempth her noth again, nor be thou thempthed, lesth ethernal perdhition should overthake both of you, bodhy and gout. Leave her, and leth me speak thu her a few words of comforth and adhvice. See you noth that her grief is thoo dheep even for thears and thath her soul is in acuthe agony? Leave her ath leasth for a thime, and go thy ways and remember, sin no more."

Lyttelton walked out of the chamber slowly and returned to his bungalow on foot, as one in a trance, leaving the carriage for Clarinda.

CHAPTER X

THE INNOCENT VICTIM

Nothing brings home to the mind more forcibly the littleness of man and his insignificance in the economy of the Universe, than the utter indifference of Nature to his joys and sufferings, physical and mental. A mighty iron-clad ship with its human cargo, the bearer of so many separate brains with all their hopes and fears, founders and sinks for ever into a bottomless grave; a mine explodes and hundreds of toilsome beings are buried alive or turned to ashes in a moment; a dearth or plague carries away millions of lives in pitiful pain or helplessness; or Mother Earth opens her awful bosom and swallows at a single gulp whole villages and cities with their teeming thousands; and yet the sun shines on brilliantly, the moon and the stars sail athwart the sky; the birds sing, the trees display their vaunting exuberance of colour, and all Nature is aglow with life and joy.

This callous indifference of Nature struck Clarinda forcibly as she lay on a rope-cot in a small and dingy room, lit by a single oil-lamp, her heart and her body both aching with severe pain. The moon and the stars she had always loved so well were now shining brilliantly and in utter

oblivion or disregard of her state, as she could well see through the door that was partly open. Four days had gone by since the dazzling bubble of all her fond hopes burst suddenly, since her tiny lamp of joy and happiness sank into the stream, leaving her to wade again through life in utter darkness and despair. After taking leave of Schwartz, she did not return to Lyttelton, but sending away his carriage, she went with Sarada to hide herself and her shame in a small cottage belonging to her. So, for a second time the golden idol of her fond heart was rudely exposed and proved to have but feet of vulgar clay! The shock was so severe as to bring about her confinement prematurely,[149] within a few hours of the disillusionment. At first she fondly thought that this would be her escape from this wretched and cruel world; but Sarada's careful nursing and expert treatment deprived her of this hope and she was now out.

She had already done with weeping and her eyes were dry and swollen. She lay gazing vacantly on the pleasant moonlight, as a thousand thoughts and fancies coursed madly through her restless brain. She had promised Schwartz that she would not return to Lyttelton or live with him, at least not until he was free and married her properly again. So it was his own life-story that he had told her, as she had indeed at first suspected; but he had evaded and deceived her, and she had believed him. How could she help believing him implicitly, her brave, noble and ever-truthful knight and guardian? Knowing his nature so well as she now did, she wondered how deep and profound his passion for her must have been, for him to stoop to such base deception. And how broken-hearted he had looked when the priest rebuked him and he left the room meekly without her! And what would become of him now? And of her? She did not fear death at all now, and though she was getting better of the illness from which she had expected a release from all her sorrows and shame, she felt she could at any time put an

end to her existence, if necessary by poison or any other means. God had indeed condemned such a wilful death, but alas! such continued misfortune and suffering as hers could not be easily borne and her act would be mercifully judged by Him. And he—she called back to memory all the details of his pitiful story and could not but admit that he too had suffered far more than falls to the lot of ordinary men. And now as the blame and the sin were his alone, she shuddered to think how his noble and truthful nature would writhe under the exposure, and she remembered many an incident in their home-life which became intelligible to her only now and which showed plainly how much he had been inwardly suffering all along! And all, for the sake of her! Her learned and wise grand-father was surely not wrong when he said that woman was man's evil genius. It was she who had practically seduced young Madhava Rao into a sinful and incestuous passion, to forget himself and act like a mad man; and it was she who had now ruined the noble nature and fair name of one who was a conscientious and pious Christian and who had saved her life twice bravely risking his own. Yes, she it was who was really to blame, though the padre had absolved her and blamed him alone. And she would die for it and thus expiate her sin. Sometimes, she heartily wished she had not learnt the truth at all; she even regretted her desire for baptism which had brought about all this calamity.

And again, an altogether different train of thought haunted her brain, and made her heart bitter against him, her false seducer. Perhaps, he was after all only an *ashadaboothi*, "a rogue in grain, veneered with sanctimonious theory." He knew that she would not yield for anything if the truth were known; and so he had deliberately deceived her, with the help of his Mussulman friend. How could she have been so very simple and foolish? Any other woman, with a little knowledge of the world, would have seen

through it all easily. Blinded by her own love, she had simply walked into the trap set for her, clumsy and palpable though it was. He was a lonely stranger, out in a distant country, and what did he care for her, except to satisfy his appetite? Perhaps, even his story was false and only a clever make-shift to deceive her. The padre knew nothing of it, except what he himself had given out. Yes, it was plain now: for, had he not abandoned her now? His trick was exposed by a fellow-European, and evidently that hurt him more than seducing and betraying a stranger woman like her, and he had therefore left her to her sin and shame, in order to raise himself in the estimation of the European Missionary. If he were really noble and truthful by nature, and if he had been forced to practise such deception on her by the very violence and ardour of his love, choosing even sin and ignominy to losing her, would he now so readily forsake her at the bidding of a dogmatic priest? Four days had gone by and yet he had not sought her, not even to ask her forgiveness for the grave injury he had done her. What was more precious to a woman than her good-name? And yet he had cheated her out of it deliberately, to gratify his own selfish passion, and did not choose even to seek her forgiveness now. Was it to meet with such a fate that she had indignantly driven out Madhava Rao and refused his proposal? Her own people at least would have then condemned her far less than now. And further, he had not scrupled to desecrate her saintly and beloved grand-father's memory by enacting such deceit in the very presence of his sacred remains. What remedy was left for her now but death? Yes, Death is the only hope and solace of such weak and forlorn beings who are victimised in this world by the powerful and the unrighteous. She too would end her misery by death, and then perhaps, her false seducer would feel alone the remorse for his shameless and cruel conduct.

Thus all her lonely cogitations led to the same conclusion

and she was thinking seriously of putting an end to her miserable existence, when her attention was suddenly diverted by the scream of a boy, who was sleeping on a mat on the floor, at the foot of her cot.

"What is it, Gopal? Why do you cry like that?" she inquired in a tender tone. "Come here, my child, and tell your aunt what frightens you so. Has anything bitten you?"

"No, I had a bad dream," replied the boy sitting up and rubbing his eyes, "I saw someone come with a big sword, and he came into this house and wanted to stab mother and you; and that frightened me. Where is my mother?"

"Your mother has gone to your uncle's house to fetch some medicine. She will be back presently. Come and sit by me here on this cot, and you will be all right."

The boy obeyed, and Clarinda tenderly put her arm round him, and he nestled close to her. He was a fine little boy, about four or five years old, and he was the sole relict of Sarada's married life, her sepoy-husband having fallen in battle some months after the birth of the child. Sarada had left the child with her brother, who was a fairly flourishing fruiterer, to grow up and be educated to some trade with his children. The cottage had belonged to her husband; and after her going away, her brother had been using it as a store-room. Now it had been hastily vacated and cleaned for Clarinda's occupation, and the little child had also come to live with his mother and her great and beautiful mistress. He had soon won his way into the latter's heart, in the midst of her sorrow and tribulation. He called her "aunt" familiarly, and served sometimes to beguile her grief with his pleasant and innocent prattle.

"Where is my mother? When will she come?" asked he again after a while, as if he was not sure that she had not been stabbed. Just then, Sarada came in, with some medicine in a cup for her mistress.

"Your son has been asking for you more than once," said Clarinda to her, "he had a dream that somebody was going to stab you and me and would not rest until he saw you again. I do wish though, that some one would really stab me when I am asleep and put an end to this wretchedness and pain!"

"I pray you, don't talk so, Bayee mine," rejoined Sarada, in an earnest and tender tone. "God knows what misfortunes and sufferings you have had to bear, but now that you are safe out of this, all shall be well hereafter. Why should you wish to die, my own poor darling, whom I love even more than I love this little child? At any rate, don't talk of dying as long as your poor servant is alive. But I fancy, we shall yet live happily and quietly together here, or in some better house, and we shall have nothing more to do with that false and unscrupulous traitor, that shameless foreigner who has so basely deceived and ruined you."

Man's reputation is as much subject to the vicissitudes of fickle fortune as his other belongings, and this was how Sarada now ordinarily referred to her "Good master," "the brave and noble feringhi," of the previous week. And paradoxical as it may appear, true love will not suffer any one else to blame its object even justly, and seeks jealously to monopolise it to itself, for good as well as for evil.

"How often should I tell you not to speak of him like that Sarada?" demanded our heroine angrily. "I am as much and even more to blame than he, and it is I who have tempted him to stoop to such a course, so utterly against his truthful and noble nature. You will make me very angry if you again abuse him unjustly in my hearing. God knows how much he may be suffering now on my account, though he nobly took all the blame on himself before the padre. It was just like him. How I wish I could learn some news of him and that he is doing well!"

"Why, his butler, Ramappa, is even now at my brother's, inquiring after you and me," said Sarada, "I came away by the back-door to avoid him. I have privately told my brother to keep him till I see you. I heard him say that his master was very ill and wanted you urgently. They have been searching for us all over the town for the last three days."

"Do fetch him here at once," exclaimed Clarinda, rising in her cot; and her heart beat excitedly and fluttered with a vague but not unpleasant sensation.

"I shall bring him this instant, but don't you get up or excite yourself, my silly darling," said Sarada, gently forcing back her mistress on to the bed, "and do drink up this decoction before I come." She left the house again immediately, and returned after a few minutes, with Lyttelton's butler, Ramappa.

CHAPTER XI

CAN YOU FORGIVE ME?

Ramappa's story was soon told: Lyttelton returned from the padre's house on foot, and in a very gloomy mood. Soon after entering his room, he called for liquor, and drank deeply. Then he paced the verandah, as was sometimes his habit, and seemed impatient for the return of the carriage. But when the carriage returned empty and the coachman reported that the mistress had gone away somewhere into the town on foot with her maid, he flew into a passion, and scolded and horse-whipped the coachman for not following her and for returning without her. He drank again, and afterwards shut himself up in his room, warning the servants not to disturb him. But Ramappa, who knew his master for more than ten years and had never before seen him in such a mood, suspected that all was not well and watched outside the room. He heard his master writing, and then after some

minutes, he heard the report of a firearm. He pushed open the door and rushed into the room to find that his master had tried to kill himself. Owing perhaps to the liquor, or to some unknown cause Lyttelton had failed, but the shot had wounded his right ear. Ramappa took away the pistol and put his master to bed, with the help of some other servants. He asked for more liquor, and they were obliged to give this to him, to keep him quiet and in bed. He refused all food, and frequently asked whether the mistress had returned. He however fell asleep in the evening and did not wake till the next morning, when he complained of a severe pain in the ball of the great toe of his left foot. Soon a fever came on with a chill, and the pain in the foot became intense and he began to writhe with it. The next day some other parts were attacked with gout and became inflamed and swollen. He was not able to leave his bed and was often in the most violent temper, writhing in agony. During the fever, he uttered the name of the mistress frequently, and he had since asked for her almost every hour. Ramappa sent the servants, one after another, to search for her, himself remaining by his master's bedside; but they all returned without finding her. As his master was getting worse day by day, pining for her, he came out that evening himself to search for her. He concluded his pitiful story by beseeching her to return to his master that very instant with him, if she wished to see him alive again.

"But she is so ill and scarcely out of the jaws of death herself, thanks to your worthy master. How can she go or even leave her bed now?" exclaimed Sarada angrily.

"I will go; I must go, and this instant, as Ramappa says," said Clarinda, in a tone of suppressed pain and excitement. "I am much better now and I think I can walk it. How far is our house from here, Ramappa?"

"About two calls' distance only," replied the butler, "but if you are so ill, madam, I shall fetch our carriage in a trice."

"No, no; that will take time; I think I can walk it;" said Clarinda, and she got up from the cot.

"You shall not walk and you will surely drop down dead even before you pass this street," exclaimed Sarada protesting. "Do wait here a few minutes, my darling, and I shall fetch my brother's bullock-cart, at least. Do be reasonable."

Clarinda agreed to this and they all reached Lyttelton's bungalow at about 11 p.m. Notwithstanding her weakness, Clarinda rushed forward into the house on getting out of the cart. She entered his chamber on tip-toe, Ramappa having warned her on the way that even the slightest noise or vibration of the floor caused him extreme pain and distress. She found him sleeping. Good God! How different he looked now from the strong and stalwart Englishman who had so gently and tenderly handed her out of the carriage at the padre's door only four days before! He was pale and emaciated, and his eyes were sunk in their sockets. She had never seen him with so much growth of hair on his face, and he looked at least ten years older than he was. She thought she saw lines and wrinkles on his forehead and about his eyes which were not there before. His strong brown hands lay on the bed like the ghosts of what they had been. Truly, the agony of remorse and the pang of her separation had wrought a great havoc on him. She kissed him softly on his forehead, but he was sleeping soundly and did not awake. She then turned from the bed, not wishing to disturb him, and intending to send at once for a physician. As she softly passed out of the room, her eyes fell on a letter on his table addressed "To Clarinda." She took it and went into her own chamber, where she found everything as she left. The letter ran as follows and she could hardly read it for her tears:

"My own, my dearest, and so you have left me, the base and false seducer of your innocence and honour! How can I ever forgive myself, much less ask or obtain your

foregiveness? How can I even see your face again, remembering your reproachful look, which I can never forget as long as I live? And not seeing your beautiful face, and not hearing your sweet voice, and without you beside me, my good and pure guardian angel, this world is all dark and bitter to me, and I cannot bear to live in it a moment longer. And death is but a poor penalty for my shameless and base crime against you. Yet, believe me, dearest, it was the love of you, the passion which filled all my soul and made me a man again, and the dread of losing you, which made me act so. My soul was diseased and dead for many years, and your redeeming and all-powerful love commanded it to live once more. And to lose all that and be dead, was more than I could bear, and I rather chose to deceive you. But I always meant to marry you properly the moment I was free to do so, and I was expecting that freedom almost hourly. My Will will show this. Life is sweet to every one in this world, and to wish for the death of another person for the sake of one's own happiness seems cruelly selfish. Yet I confess it without shame, I have been constantly harbouring that wish in my heart, feeling, as I do even now, that after all that I had endured on her account, I deserved my release from the galling bondage long ago. And it would have been a relief to her too. But it pleased God otherwise, and in my impatience and selfishness, I have done what has cost me so dear. You have left me, and life is unbearable without you, and death not a punishment, but a release from utter misery. I have therefore decided to kill myself now, for I cannot bear to live without you. The very thought makes me mad, and in my helpless rage, I flogged the poor coach-man who brought the empty carriage. I am sure I shall soon go mad if I live like this, and then I shall not be able even to put an end to my wretchedness. I shall therefore kill myself now. Think of me kindly after I am gone; think of my love, of our love, of all that I have suffered in life, and of my natural

eagerness to enjoy the priceless blessing which it pleased God to place in my hands. Think, also of your own love, of your past sufferings, of the gross injustice of many of the so-called laws and moral codes, and how 'man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn.' Thinking of all these, and of our happy life together, though all too brief and so cruelly and suddenly nipped in the bud, I fondly hope that you may perhaps forgive me. What can I say more? And I pray you, let not the sin and the blame of the unworthy father be visited in any way on the sweet offspring of our love which these eyes shall never behold. And standing as I do now on the very brink of eternity, my soul seems to have a clearer vision and I feel that such love as ours cannot be wrong or sinful, and that I shall claim thee as my own again, even before the Divine Throne of Mercy. Adieu, my dearest, and may God protect you until we meet again in a better world! And may He forgive me in His infinite mercy! Amen!

YOUR OWN TO THE DEATH, HARRY

Clarinda read the letter over and over again and wept in joy. Her heart was full of a great peace and gratitude to God, and she knelt where she stood and poured forth her feelings silently in prayer and thanksgiving. She was aroused by a noise in the next room, and as she entered it, she heard Lyttelton's words, "Has thy mistress not come yet, Ramappa?" The butler was not in the room, and she hastened to the bedside saying: "I am here, dearest, I have come back and I shall leave you no more for any priest or saint."

He looked at her face silently and doubtfully, and whispered slowly after a while, "Is it really you, dearest, my own, my love?" And well he might doubt his eyes, so pale and worn she was, and so much her beautiful face had aged in a few days!

"Yes, darling, I am your own Clarinda, come back to

my dearest love, and I shall never more leave you." And she took up and kissed his wasted hand tenderly.

"Can you forgive me?" he asked in a hollow sepultural tone, while a few large tears rolled out of his sunken eyes.

"Yes; I forgive you, and I want you to forgive me too, for thus forsaking you in your sorrow. No man shall ever separate hereafter whom God hath brought together, and we shall live happy for many years and love each other even more as we grow old. And now that I have come back, you shall get well again soon."

"Thank God! Thank God!" whispered he fervently, as he took her hand and pressed it to his lips.

CHAPTER XII

RELEASE AT LAST

The scene has changed from the ancient Chola to the Pandyan country to Palamcottah in the Tinnevelly district which belonged to the Nawab and was held for him by the English. There was a small English garrison at Palamcottah then, and till so recently as 1880; and a regiment of native infantry was stationed at Tachanallur, three miles across the Tambrapurni river. There was a commandant, a Revenue Collector, a Paymaster, and other officers and factors at Palamcottah, all Europeans, and quite a jolly company they generally were. It was into such a circle that Lyttelton was now transferred.

With the return of Clarinda and her careful nursing, he recovered rapidly, and was soon more healthy and active than even before he fell ill. But his stay at Tanjore was disliked by the Nawab, who considered it prejudicial to himself on account of his known friendliness to Tulsaji. The storm that was soon to burst with the siege and capture of Tanjore by the English and the cession of the Kingdom to

the Nawab for a period of three years, (1773-1776), until its restoration to the deposed Maratha King by order of the Court of Directors, was already brewing,[150] and the Nawab easily induced the Company's Governor at Fort. St. George to transfer Lyttelton from Tanjore. Neither Clarinda nor Lyttelton, however, disliked the change, and after a farewell visit by her to her grandfather's tomb, they gladly left Tanjore with all its bitter and painful memories and associations, and emigrated southwards to their new station, Palamcottah. Sarada accompanied them of course, and at the special request of her mistress, she took the little Gopal too with her.

Lyttleton and his strange family lived at Palamcottah in a bungalow among the European quarters to the south-east of the native town, and not very far from the arsenal, which exists to this day and is now used as a magazine for gun-powder and other ammunition. Their home-life was markedly different now. While at Tanjore and before the advent of Schwartz, Clarinda's happiness had been as complete, unalloyed and perfect as was possible in this troublesome world, though on Lyttelton's side, a guilty conscience had sometimes embittered his cup of bliss and occasionally driven him to seek temporary forgetfulness in liquor. But now, the worst was known; and though his deep remorse and illness had at first made her oblivious to everything else and anxious only for his recovery, and to rejoice exceedingly when he was hale and hearty again; though he too was consoled and cheered by her forgiveness and affectionate solicitude, and was even inclined to think somewhat lightly of his own offence, now that it was no longer a secret between them, and all had passed off fairly well on the whole, it was plain that Clarinda's noble trust in her lover was shattered for ever, that he was not now the same chivalrous and saintly hero in her eyes. And though he still loved her passionately, yet was there deep within his heart, a sort of impatience and anger,

an unpleasant sensation at having been detected in such a mean trick, at not being as pure and noble as herself. This was 'the little rift within the lute, which though it never made the music mute'[151] altogether, was by and by inevitably to produce its own discord and mar the harmony of their home-life in a hundred little ways, by various acts of commission, by words, by gestures, and even more by ominous silences.

The company of other Europeans, at first embarrassing, soon began to accentuate the unpleasant feeling in Lyttelton's mind, and to affect his attitude towards Clarinda. Not one of them viewed his liaison with disfavour, and his friends tried to dissuade him from marrying her. Some of them were also living like him, but more openly and even boasted of the beauty and other qualifications of their mistresses. They did not indeed bring them into the company of the few European ladies at Palamcottah; but among themselves, they were more free, and often exchanged social amenities in their own houses and in the company of their mistresses. Lyttelton did not care to adopt their fashion in this-respect, but to the two or three Englishmen with whom he soon became intimate and who came to know well his own history and sympathised with him sincerely, he wished to show the hospitality of his house and to display the rare beauty and accomplishments of his beloved, who, he felt sure, would be treated by them as his wife to-be, and with the regard and sympathy due to her noble character and past misfortunes in life. But she refused this altogether, and was unrelenting, plead what he might. She was not a true and honourable wife, and she would not therefore usurp the position which was due only to such a woman. She declined to receive or have anything to do with his friends, and this stung him to the quick and seemed to him as nothing but perverse obstinacy and a desire to humiliate him. Finding all his pleadings and persuasions futile, he became sulky, and gradually indifferent; and he began to indulge in their company

frequently, either in their houses, or at his own table without her. Those were days of high living and hard drinking, and Englishmen, as their own poet boastfully says, were 'most potent in potting' and "the Dane, the German and swag-bellied Hollander were nothing to the English."[152] Lyttelton was impelled to drink hard by a hereditary taint, as much as by occasional bickerings and unhappiness with Clarinda, for 'to be wroth with one we love, doth work like madness in the brain.'[153] This told upon his health, and she pleaded against it, but in vain. There were indeed frequent reconciliations, sealed by 'kissings with tears,' and mutual protestations and pledges of eternal love, not insincere for the time being. But their fallings out were not of the light and superficial kind which "endears all the more" afterwards, and deserve to be blessed by all happy lovers; and so the rift in their lute slowly but surely widened with the lapse of time and perfect harmony became impossible. Not even the bitter experience of his illness at Tanjore, nor the pain and anxiety felt by Clarinda were enough to deter him from seeking the dangerous conviviality of his new friends, and this embittered her heart more than anything else. She began to feel more and more lonely again, and a vague sense of weariness and depression became habitual with her. Sitting up for his return late on the nights he dined out, she wept bitterly and silently, and even Surada was not fully aware of all the grief, humiliation and pain that were breaking the heart of her "dear Bayee." She grew very fond of the little Gopal, and he alone was able, with his pleasant prattle and precociously keen sense of humour to call an occasional smile to her sad and beautiful countenance now.

Men seldom do evil without deluding and quieting the inner monitor with some plausible plea or other, and even the 'motiveless malignity' of an Iago[154] hunts for motives and seeks to lull the pricking conscience within. Lyttelton did not so neglect his beloved, or give way to an evil and harmful

impulse, without any compunction. He was angry with Clarinda for 'refusing to be reasonable,' as he put it, and his subsequent conduct was a sort of purblind revenge. He expected a speedy release from his galling bondage, and then, of course he would marry her again properly and she would receive baptism and become his true and honourable wife. All her moodiness would then vanish like a bad dream, and she would herself regain and bless him too with the unclouded happiness of their days at Tanjore before the bigoted priest marred it all. Such was his fond dream and the excuse with which he mollified the stingings of his conscience.

But alas! it was not to be, and the year after his transfer to Palamcottah, he again had a severe attack of that gout, which he knew had already carried away two of his family.

He was soon reduced to a helpless mass of inert, but highly sensitive human flesh, stretched on a rack of excruciating pain and agony. The attack was far more virulent than the previous one, and it melted Clarinda's loving heart to see his sufferings. She never left his side, nursed him tenderly day and night, cheerfully bore all his fits of temper with an infinite and untiring patience, and scrupulously carried out the doctor's injunctions. She did not leave his side to hide herself when his friends visited him now; and not one but was struck by her absolute devotion to him and the quiet dignity of her manner.

"You are indeed a lucky dog, Lyttelton," exclaimed Mr. George Westcott one day, after having quietly observed her for some time, and when she had gone out of the room for a minute to fetch some opium for fomentation, "deuced lucky to have such a loving and devoted nurse. To be ill and be thus nursed seems almost a pleasure, a luxury."

"God bless her for it! I don't deserve her," murmured Lyttelton.

"Is she well-off by herself, if I am not too inquisitive?"

asked Westcott presently.

"Her grandfather left her immense property," replied Lyttelton, "but the Tanjore Raja seized a half of it and she herself gave away the other half to charity, making only a small provision for herself: and ever since the Nawab got possession of the Tanjore Kingdom, she has not received even a copper coin from there. But I leave all my property to her, and I only wish now that this fell disease would let me live long enough to marry her. I shall then die quite happy."

"Well, she seems to deserve it all and more," rejoined Westcott. "You know I am dead against any of us marrying native women of whatever caste or creed; but if it be permissible and even a duty under any extraordinary circumstances, it must be something like yours. Poor Martin has gout and a wife, his own cousin too, and we know how the one aggravates the other. That is perhaps an exception; but I feel sure that no English-woman, however good and devoted, could have made a better wife or nurse to you."

"God bless her for it!" murmured Lyttelton again. "I am afraid I have been behaving rather badly towards her of late." Clarinda returned with the drug and the conversation changed.

After Westcott had gone away that evening, his words, haunted Lyttelton's mind; and stung by a keener remorse than he had ever felt since his illness at Tanjore, he asked for Clarinda's forgiveness again and again, and spoke to her very kindly and affectionately.

"I have been very thoughtless and unkind to you, dearest," continued he in an earnest and regretful tone; "and I can not die happy unless I survive this attack, to make you some small reparation at least. How much have I not pained this poor, loving heart, and how ill must you think of me now and after I am gone!"

"Don't talk so, my love," replied she, her eyes brimming

with tears, "don't talk of going away and leaving me alone in this world. God knows how much my heart has ached for you ever since we came to live here, and how distressed and anxious I feel at the pass to which you have brought yourself by not heeding my words and indulging in that dreadful habit. May God grant that you soon recover from this, and I pray to Him daily, early and late, to be merciful unto us, His erring children, this once as He has been till now. I hope you will be your own good self when you get well and that will make me so happy."

Lyttelton did not reply for a while, but remained thoughtful, caressing her hand which he had taken up in his. He then said in an almost solemn tone:—

"I am afraid I shall never get over this, dearest; the outward symptoms are indeed fast disappearing since this morning, and I look better, but I feel queerly in the head, and fear that the malady is directing its virulence elsewhere. If it touches the brain, then there can be little hope, and I may collapse any moment. Would to God that I may get my release before I die, and in time to marry you properly, hereby this bed-side if need be. I can not die in peace otherwise."

"Do not talk like this, my love, or be down-hearted. God will surely listen to my prayer and be merciful unto us this once. You do look much better to-day and I hope you will recover soon."

"If God spares me this once," replied he remorsefully, "it must be solely for your sake, dearest, and not because I am worthy of His grace or mercy. Mine has been a life of sin and rebellion against His commandments all along, and I did not profit one whit by the great mercy He was pleased to show me from time to time. I first broke the heart of my loving parents by marrying secretly that wretched woman who has ever since dogged my life like a curse. Stung by

remorse for a while, I tried to walk in His path, and it then pleased Him to bless my life with the most precious jewel of love. But ere He was pleased to fulfil His Divine blessing in His own good time, I grew impatient, and breaking all law, human and divine, meanly and selfishly sought to possess and enjoy it forcibly, not caring how deeply I injured others. The Scripture says 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life.'[155] But I would not wait for even a little while and shamefully yielded to temptation. I have been suffering for this ever since, and God in His just wrath, has withheld the release from my bondage, which seemed so near and imminent years ago. And how I have treated you, His own divine gift, most foully, and made a beast of myself, and brought this just retribution on my head. How dare I expect His mercy then, or even pray to Him to lengthen my days a little longer, having offended Him at every step of my life?"

"Do not blame yourself so, or give way to despondency, Harry," said Clarinda in a kindly and earnest tone, "none of us in this world but has his or her heavy burden of sin to bear and account for. But what are our little loads before His infinite compassion and mercy, if only we repent and pray to Him with faith and meekness? Doth He not expressly say that 'there shall be joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety-and-nine just persons, which need no repentence?'[156] Why do you despair so then, dearest, or magnify our faults, which are after all, as nothing to the sins of some other men? Cheer up, my love, and let not undue despondency weigh heavily on your heart and make your malady worse. The doctor has told me to keep you quite quiet and free from all anxiety and care."

"You are indeed my good angel, Clarinda, my love," said Lyttelton, fondly kissing her hand, "and may God spare me at least for your sake. Then, indeed, I hope to prove worthier of you."

She kissed him softly on the forehead and her heart was glad and full of a new hope for the future, and she prayed to God fervently for his early recovery.

But with the suppression of the outward symptoms, the fell disease attacked his brain that very night. He was at first delirious and raved wildly, muttering her name and imploring God to release and enable him to marry her; but soon coma supervened and he passed away in insensate peace before day-break. We have no words to paint adequately the effect of that sudden bereavement upon her, or the great desolation which pervaded her heart. Her grief now was even more poignant than on the death of her beloved Babaji, and her heart ached and ached with a void that could never be filled again in this life.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MAGIC BALM

Before her pseudo-wedding with Lyttelton, our heroine had interested herself for a time in the few Christian families at Tanjore. But after the wedding, her love for him and her studies and domestic duties had taken up all her time and left no room in her heart for other cares and interests. At Palamcottah, she had deliberately and persistently shut herself up within her home and refused all social communication with the outside world, from a sense of humiliation and shame.

Mary, the native-christian wife of an English sergeant, had vainly endeavoured more than once to make the acquaintance of the consort of the newly-arrived English Officer, who was reported to be so very rich, beautiful, and cultured. And now that the officer had suddenly died and left her forlorn in a strange country, Mary came again to console her, and to gently point out the error of her former

life and to lead her into the path of righteous repentance and faith in the true and only Redeemer: for Mary prided herself on being a pious Christian and a zealous evangelist.[157] She, however, soon found how mistaken she was about the moral depravity of the beautiful and accomplished stranger; and though she at first bored Clarinda immensely, her tales of sin, poverty and suffering soon arrested the latter's attention and appealed to her gentle and sorrow-stricken heart. Mary deserves more than a passing mention at our hands—her husband, who was a sergeant in the garrison at Palamcottah, was a zealous and bigoted Christian, who thought it a greater glory to convert a single heathen to the only true faith than to kill a hundred on the field of battle and send their erring souls to eternal perdition. Mary was the daughter of his Christian servant, and she was so buxom and attractive, and admired and followed his lay sermons so well, that he fell in love with and married her, as the best help-mate he could have in life to aid him in his evangelical work. To her husband's proselytising enthusiasm, Mary brought a naturally tender heart, which overflowed with sympathy at the sight of suffering and distress, and yearned to alleviate them as much as possible. She was therefore always on the look-out not only for erring and ignorant souls which she could enlighten and guide aright, but even more for rich patrons who could help her in her philanthropic activities; as for poverty and distress, they were ever at hand and needed no search. She had therefore sought Clarinda's acquaintance for more than one reason: and on finding now that she was as pious and a better informed Christian than herself, she sought to divert her bitter grief by pouring into her ears the tales of sin, starvation, disease, and suffering which she knew personally and was trying to relieve. So earnest and self-forgetting was this good woman in her noble and self-imposed task and so well did her simple and artless narratives impress Clarinda, that she soon began to take an

interest in her work.

Clarinda at first refused all consolation and simply revelled in grief; but soon the child Gopal succeeded in diverting her a little now and then. He became her constant companion and she began to treat him as her confidant and even to share her sorrows and sad thoughts with him. Lyttelton had left her all his property which was quite considerable and demanded her attention and management. Sarada suggested a move back to Tanjore, but her mistress refused, and seemed to derive some comfort in remaining in the same house where he breathed his last and in visiting his burial place often and bedecking it with flowers. Their last conversation, a few hours before his sudden death, recurred to her again, and endeared his memory more than anything else. But not the healing hand of Time, nor even the little child's prattle, fondly as she loved him now, calling him her 'dear little sonny,' served to divert her grief and to fill her mind with other thoughts and cares so much as the new scenes and life which Mary opened to her. Born and brought up in wealth and luxury the sorrows and sufferings of her life, great though they were and far beyond ordinary measure, had never been connected with starvation, squalor, and sickness; and her high caste and her sex had consigned her to a more or less secluded life, into which these forms of misery never penetrate. It was therefore as a revelation to her now, and her noble heart swelled with pity to see so much, of relievable and avoidable distress. Mary's good heart often led her, into indiscreet charity, even as her soldier-husband was carried away by evangelical enthusiasm into baptising a heathen accountant who could only repeat the five principal articles of the catechism and knew nothing more of Christianity.[158] But Clarinda's innate common sense saved her from such mistakes, and she organised her charities more carefully, emphasising the doctrine that Heaven helps only those who help themselves. Nor were her activities

confined to the relief of immediate suffering; she opened a free school for indigent children in her own house, and nothing gave her greater pleasure than to teach the little ones herself and to win their love and confidence. They called her Amma, mother, and this gladdened her loving heart. So great was her enthusiasm in this school, that it infected even Sarada, who became a pupil, along with Gopal, and learnt to read and write Tamil. A feature of the school which delighted the teacher and the pupils, small and big, more than anything else, were the stories from the *Puranas* and the *Bible* which Clarinda told them daily, for they were as interesting as they seemed endless. These manifold activities helped her to forget her grief and lead a most useful and busy life; in fact they were as a magic balm to her sorely wounded and tired heart and gave her life a new purpose and a new pleasure. They also raised her very high in the esteem of the Commandant, the Collector, and some other English officers; and one or two of the vulgar sort, who had hoped to appropriate to themselves the rich and beautiful mistress of Lyttelton in course of time, but soon gave up all hope of success in that direction.

The reader will remember that Clarinda was as yet unbaptised, and it was the ambition of the proselytising sergeant, Mary's husband, to have it performed early. But she refused, and would give no reason for it; and some years passed on in this manner.[159] Mr. George Westcott became engaged to Miss Ann Mirin, and he wished to be married to her by a European priest. He invited Schwartz to Palamcottah to perform the ceremony, and also because there were many children to be baptised, both at Madura and Tinnevelly. The great German Missionary responded to this invitation and reached Tachanallur, travelling by easy stages from Trichinopoly, by the end of February 1778. 'After providing for the spiritual wants of the Christians in the Native regiment stationed there, he entered Palamcottah in the

afternoon.' The next day, as Schwartz was about to baptise some children, Clarinda presented herself with her adopted son Gopal and her faithful servant Sarada, and asked for baptism. Seven years had elapsed since the Missionary saw her at Tanjore, and he could hardly recognise her now. But she reminded him and briefly explained her altered state. She was so highly praised on all sides by the local Christians, European and Indian, that Schwartz gladly acceded to her request, and she was baptised under the name of "Clarinda." Her adopted son, Gopal, was baptised under the name of "Henry Lyttelton," and his mother Sarada under the name of "Sarah." Clarinda received her baptism at the great Missionary's hands "with much emotion," and the 3rd of March 1778, on which this event took place, was a red-letter day in the calendar of her life.

CHAPTER XIV

LAST DAYS

The Son of God in whom Clarinda believed as her Redeemer repeatedly warned His followers to be secret in their charitable works, and 'not sound a trumpet, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have the glory of men.'[160] He told them, 'not to let the left hand know what the right hand doeth.'[161] That must be our excuse for treating this last part of her life in such a summary manner. We shall only record briefly here what she did after her baptism, after she had donned the Lord's livery. Her intellectual vigour and activity seem to have once more asserted themselves, but in a very different field; many were the keen contests, theological and dialectical, which took place in her house between the adherents of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant faiths, and she was a clever and able exponent of the latter. Even conversions from the older to the later dogma are recorded, presumably following these

discussions. Two families of Shanars who lived in one of the several villages which she held in mortgage—Terivilai, to the south of Palamcottah,—became Christians and are said to have been 'the firstlings of that caste.' She preached the Gospel to her Hindu countrymen and countrywomen in her own house, and her 'exhortations often produced a good effect.' In order to help in the work, she appointed a catechist, Maria Savari, at her own cost. Her charities increased, and she freely and generously spent the vast property Lyttelton had left her in relieving human suffering. With the growing success of her labours in the cause of Christianity, the absence of a Protestant Church at Palamcottah which had a considerable congregation, native and European, troubled her mind; and in the year 1783, she conceived the idea of supplying the desideratum at her own cost. Close to the spot where her beloved lay buried, she built a small chapel, which exists to this day, and which was the first Protestant Church in what is now numerically the greatest Christian district in all India. The Reverend Mr. Pohle, who visited Palamcottah a few years before this in 1780, and who then baptised another of her servants by name John, writes of her as follows:—"She is known as a consistent Christian, and I doubt not that she is anxious about the true welfare of her household. I have reason to rejoice that I have visited her." This is indeed high praise from a European Missionary; and a native catechist from Tranquebar says, that he "could not praise her sufficiently for her excellent knowledge and good example."

Having erected a church, its consecration for the holy purpose for which it was intended, became her next anxiety. She was further troubled in mind at the absence of a missionary, or even a competent country-priest, to keep up and spread "the good work" at Palamcottah, and she was also eager to place her adopted son, Henry Lyttelton, now an intelligent, growing lad, under the great German's

immediate care and tuition. With this threefold object in view, she again visited Tanjore, which Schwartz had made his head-quarters, in the year 1784, taking her adopted son and two other earnest Christians with her. Her faithful servant Sarada was dead already, and she had laid her to rest with a heavy heart,—sobbing bitterly during the burial-service like a child. One feature of her character, at this, the closing period of her life, is noteworthy—her associates and helpers were all of. the lowest caste, though she was herself a high-caste Brahmin;[162] so completely had she imbibed the Christian spirit and the doctrine of the perfect equality of all His children in the eyes of the Universal Father. Many of her co-religionists of to-day, at Palamcottah and elsewhere, might well take a lesson from this.[163]

During her northward mission, she had occasion, to visit Ramnad and Tranquebar, but she was most successful with Schwartz at Tanjore. He sent with her at once the distinguished catechist Gnanapragasam; and a few months later, his father in-law, the country-priest Rayappan, and his "much-valued catechist Satyanadhan." Schwartz himself visited Palamcottah a second time in the following year (1785) at her earnest request, and consecrated her little church. That was another proud day in her life.

During her Christian mission to Tanjore, she went to Vallam to visit her dear grand-father's tomb, but to her great regret and sorrow, she found that Hyder Ali's recent invasion had left no vestige of it. The village of Malayur had also been seized by the Nawab during his occupation of Tanjore and her charities terminated. She appealed to Tulsaji, who was again on the throne, but in vain. This sudden severance of her only surviving connection with Tanjore and the strange mishap which had put an end to what she had intended as a lasting and monumental charity, made her, on her return to Palamcottah, to be ever more liberal with her wealth than before. She always enhanced the value of her benefactions a

hundredfold by her personal kindness and genuine sympathy, and her name was blessed in many a humble home of the poor and the afflicted. Indeed, she realised in the closing years of her life, the truth of the poet's lines:—

"There is always noble service for noble souls to do."[164]

APPENDIX 1

AUTHOR'S HISTORICAL NOTES AND GLOSSARY

(*Bibliography*:— Orme's *History of Hindustan*; Ranade's *Rise of the Maratha Power*; Hemingway's *Gazeteer of the Tanjore District*; Bishop Caldwell's *Tinnevelly Mission*; Canon Penny's *The History of the Church in Madras*; Col. Malleson's *"Clive"* and *"Dupleix"* (Rulers of India); Sir Charles Wilson's Clive (*English Men of Action*); Hickey's *The Tanjore Principality*; *The Land of the Tamulians*; Narasimmalu's *Tamil History of South India*, &c.)

Of the above books, the author is most indebted for the historical details of the period to the works of Orme and Ranade, and the Tanjore Gazeteer; and to Bishop Caldwell and Canon Penny for all the information about the heroine. But, historians, like doctors, differ greatly, and even in respect of facts. Wilson, for example, dates the battle of St. Thome on the 24th of October 1746, while Malleson places it on the 4th of November. The Reverend Bishop and the Canon vary very much indeed, and frequently; *e.g.*, Penny makes Schwartz visit Palamcottah four times, in 1771, in 1779, and twice in 1785, while Caldwell mentions only two visits, in 1778 and 1785; the Canon also describes the heroine as married to Lyttelton and talks of their son, unlike the Bishop. These are only a few instances of such discrepancies in the civil and ecclesiastical accounts of the period. The author has frequently followed Caldwell in the third Book of the novel, or struck a middle course, as seemed best to himself. To enable the reader, however, to distinguish fact from fiction, and to judge how much of the foregoing is purely imaginative, the following extracts are given from the *Gazeteer* and Cadwell's *Tinnevelly Mission*.

Extracts from Mr. Hemingway's Tanjore District Gazeteer

"..... The sway of the Moghul Emperors was not extended to Tanjore till 1691, in which year the country was invaded by Zulfakar Khan, the military Governor of the Carnatic under Aurangzeb. It was probably on this occasion that he extracted an acknowledgment of liability to pay a yearly tribute, which as ascertained by subsequent enquiries in 1762, was settled at four lakhs of rupees a year—two lakhs as regular tribute and two lakhs as Durbar charges."

".... ... . In 1725 the Maravans were divided by internal dissensions regarding the succession to their chiefship on the death of Vijia Raghunatha, the adopted son of the notorious Kilavan 'the old man.' Tanjore and Trichinopoly took different sides in the dispute and the troops of Tanjore won a decisive victory and placed their protege on the throne. The new chieftain failed in some way to gratify his benefactors, and Tanjore did not hesitate to join a confederacy of two rival claimants to the chief-ship. He was imprisoned and in 1730 the Kingdom of Ramnad was divided into three portions, two of which were given to the two Maravar conspirators and formed the basis of the two present Zemindaries of Ramnad and Sivaganga, while a third was retained by Tanjore. This last was the strip of country north of the Pambannar which had been already seized by the Maratha Kings in 1687-88 and had afterwards been recovered by the Maravans. Most of it was soon recovered by the Maravans in the course of a successful resistance to an attempt by the Tanjoreans to reinstate their original protege..... "The death of the last of them (Tukkoji) was followed by several years of internal dissensions which had momentous consequences. He had five sons named Bava Sahib, Saiyaji, Anna Sahib, Nana Sahib and Pratap Singh, of whom the third and fourth died before their father, while the youngest Pratap Singh was illegitimate. The eldest, Bava Sahib, ruled for about one year after his father's death, when he also died. His wife

Sujana Bai then governed the kingdom for some time, apparently about two years. In 1738 a pretended nephew of Tukkoji, named variously Savai Shahji, or Kattu Raja ('the forest king,') was elevated to the throne by the influence of the Muhammadan commander of the fort—a certain Saiyid; and Saiyaji, Tukkoji's second son was in exile to Chidambaram entreating the French at Pondicherry to restore him to the throne. It would thus appear that Saiyaji had succeeded his sister-in-law for a short time and had been ousted by the pretender. The latter's triumph was shortlived, for by August of the same year Saiyaji had succeeded without French aid and by bribery, in ousting his rival and established himself as king in Tanjore. His temporary exile however was of importance in bringing him into relations with the French which ended in their acquisition of Karaikal. He was deposed a second time either in 1739 or 1740, probably in the former of these years. Mill ascribes all the revolutions between the death of Bava Sahib and the final fall of Saiyaji to the Muhammadan commander Saiyid, but Orme's version that Saiyaji was deposed and Pratap Singh was placed upon the throne by the general concurrence of the principal men of the kingdom, is apparently accepted by the Tanjore Commission of 1798. It is not impossible that Chanda Sahib who seems to have subdued Saiyaji in the early part of 1739, was directly or indirectly responsible for the change. Some nine years after his deposition, Saiyaji applied to the Madras Government to restore him, and they agreed to do so (1749) on condition that he ceded the fort and territory of Devicotta and paid the expenses of the war. Their motives are described by Orme as follows:— "The offers he made of concessions to the company; the favourable account given of him by the interpreters who introduced him: and the belief too hastily entertained of a false narration of his misfortunes, induced the English to think they would acquire as much honour as advantage by their efforts to reinstate him." Two expeditions were accordingly despatched against Devicotta. The first of

them consisting of 430 Europeans and 1,000 sepoys, failed ignominiously and also served to show that there was no sympathy in Tanjore for Saiyaji; but the English resolved to persevere, from a desire both to regain their prestige and to reimburse themselves for the cost of their former failure. The second expedition, led by Stringer Lawrence and accompanied by young Clive, was successful in taking Devicotta, but, as it was clear that there would be great difficulties in making any further conquests, in the Tanjore District, and as events had occurred which had led Pratap Singh to desire a cessation of hostilities; nothing more was done. Devicotta was however ceded to the English. The event which chiefly led Pratap Singh to wish for peace was the battle of Ambur (1749) which had established Chanda Sahib as Nawab of Arcot.

Kept a close prisoner by the Marathas till 1749, Chanda Sahib was released in that year, in part by the influence of Dupleix, and joined the would-be Nizam, Muzaffar Jung, in an invasion of the Carnatic in order to dispute the sovereignty of the rightful and *de facto* Nizam, Nazir Jung. The campaign ended with the battle of Ambur in which Anwarruddin, the Nawab of Arcot, claiming under Nazir Jung, was defeated and killed, and Chanda Sahib was nominated by Muzaffar Jung as Nawab of Arcot. It is not surprising that Pratap Singh should have feared Chanda Sahib's resentment. The part he had taken in inviting the Marathas as well as the hope of plunder from his wealthy kingdom were amply sufficient to spur Chanda Sahib, and almost the first operation undertaken by the new Nawab was an attempt to reduce Tanjore. This was averted by the skilful procrastination of the king who protracted negotiations till the approach of an avenging army under Nazir Jung compelled the besiegers to retreat. Pratap Singh had however been compelled to give Chanda Sahib a bond for 46 lakhs of rupees. Tanjore was now drawn into the great struggle between Chanda Sahib and the French on

the one side and Mohamed Ali, son of Anwarruddin and the English on the other. Its ruler, though tempted by Dupleix, declared aganist Chanda Sahib; and after much hesitation, sent a detachment which took part with the English in the events which finally declared the struggle against him. He was induced to give himself up to Mankoji, the Tanjore General who, in defiance of his most sacred oaths, had him murdered. ..... Tanjore was among the first to suffer from the renewal of hostilities between the English and the French. The French had possession of the bond for 46 lakhs of rupees which Pratap Singh had been compelled to give Chanda Sahib as long before as 1749; and as they were badly in want of money, they marched into his country in 1758 under Lally to exact payment. Landing at Karaikal, Lally plundered Nagore and Kivalur and finally besieged Tanjore. The king however resisted stoutly, and, on the arrival of the English troops at Tanjore and of the English fleet off Karaikal, Lally raised the siege. His retreat was hampered by want of food and by the Raja's troops, and he reached Karaikal with difficulty. ..... His tribute was in arrears and the Nawab, much indebted to the English in every sense of that term, was anxious to find a pretext for annexing this rich principality. First, he raised the general question of the tribute due by Tanjore to himself; and this difficulty was solved by the mediation of the English (October 12, 1762). Next he made him wantonly obnoxious to the Raja in the matter of one of the dams (the Melur anicut) which prevent the Cauvery from flowing into the Coleroon. The dam was in the territory of the Nawab, but its deterioration, though disastrous to Tanjore did not affect him. It can therefore only have been for the most unamiable motives that he would neither keep the embankment in repair himself, nor permit the king of Tanjore to do so. This difficulty was also arranged by the British, who (in 1764) persuaded the Nawab to permit the king to look after the work.' *Kivalur:*

"Lally halted here in 1752 on his way to Tanjore and ransacked the building (temple) for treasure. Here also he met the Tanjore envoys, and blew six harmless Brahmins from his guns, suspecting them to be spies." *Nagore*: "Its first appearance in general history is in 1758, when Lally landing at Karaikal on his expedition to Tanjore, plundered it on the way. He had expected a great booty, but the merchants had removed their money and jewels and offered very little for the redemption of their warehouses. Thereupon Lally farmed out the plunder of the town to the Commander of his hussars for Rs. 2,00,000." *Devicotta*: "When Saiyaji, the ex-king of Tanjore, solicited the assistance of the English to reinstate him in 1749, Devicotta was the reward demanded for their help, and their first efforts were directed against it. It was thought that an excellent harbour might be made here by removing the bar at the mouth of the Coleròon and that the possession of the place would consequently be of the first importance. A second expedition, which comprised 800 Europeans and 1,500 sepoys under the command of Major Stringer Lawrence was sent by sea in the following month. Clive (then a Lieutenant) offered, and was permitted, to lead the attack. The storming party consisting of 34 Europeans and 700 sepoys became divided, while crossing a rivulet in front of the fort; for the former, when crossed first, marched briskly on, while the sepoys waited till all had crossed, in order to concentrate their forces on the bank. Meanwhile a sudden charge of cavalry from the fort almost annihilated the small body of Europeans thus left without support, and Clive himself narrowly escaped being cut down. Lawrence now attacked the breach with all his European troops and took the fort with ease, the enemy making no attempt to defend the walls, but hurrying out at the other side. The place was garrisoned and soon became very useful, both as a point of debarcation for the war near Trichinopoly and as a retreat for the wounded."

Tanjore: "The town consists of the larger and smaller forts and two suburbs, Manambu Chavadi in the south-east and Karuntittangudi in the north. The European houses are in the former of these two suburbs. Tanjore was the scene of the death of the last Nayak prince, and the details of that tragic occurrence are given in one of the Mackenzie manuscripts. The invaders from Madura easily forced their way into the large fort and appeared at the palace gate, whereupon the king, who had caused the Zenana in which his family were placed to be stored with gunpowder had this building blown up; and then he himself dashed out of the palace, with his son Mannar, sword in hand and died fighting to the last. The story is still kept in mind by the shattered tower over the Nayak's Zenana at the northwestern corner of the palace. That part of the building remains vacant to this day, and is believed to be visited by the ghosts of the unfortunate women who died in it. In 1758 occurred Lally's attack upon Tanjore primarily intended to secure the payment of the balance of what was promised in 1749. The proceedings again began with ineffectual negotiations, but Lally was impatient and at once sent for his guns from Karaikal to bombard the fort. He approached Tanjore on July 18th and, after a preliminary bombardment and more futile negotiations, fired at the fortifications from August 2nd to August 7th. A breach was made in the south face of the small fort near the south-eastern corner. The batteries were placed in front of the water course that lies south of the railway. At this juncture, news arrived that the English fleet was threatening Karaikal. Lally was also short of powder. Though some of his officers thought differently, he did not consider the breach practicable, and accordingly made up his mind to withdraw. On the dawn of the day fixed for the retreat, he was nearly killed, being knocked down and stunned by a cavalry sortie from the fort. The garrison was materially strengthened by English help on this occasion. Five hundred

English sepoys, ten European artillery-men and 300 Kallan irregulars had been sent from Trichinopoly before Lally's arrival, and 500 more sepoys with two excellent English sergeants and 27 Cannoners arrived just before the breaching operations began.

"An interesting feature in the ornamentation of this (Brahathiswara temple) tower is the fact that the carvings are generally of a Vaishnavite type, though the ornamentation of the other parts is Saivite. Another curious fact is that a European is to be found among the figures on the north-side of the tower. The popular belief is that this is the figure of a Dane who helped to build the temple. It is probably the case that both the European figure and the Vaishnavite figures were erected by the Nayaks (who built most of the Vaishnavite temples in the district), and that they were assisted by a Dane, or Danes shortly before, or shortly after the acquisition of Tranquebar by that nation in 1620. It is a fact that Roeland Crape, the pioneer of Danish enterprise in the country, had been at the court of Tanjore in his youth, and it seems not unlikely that the European statue represents some Dane who assisted the Nayak in his building.

The chief sights of the palace are the two darbar halls called respectively after the Nayaks and the Marathas. Both are spacious and brightly coloured apartments with pillared roofs. The former contains a remarkable slab of gneiss, on which the throne used probably to be placed, but which is now occupied by a fine statue of Sarabhoji by Chantry. The dimensions of the slab are 18′ × 16′ × 2′ – $1^{1}/_{2}$″. In the Maratha darbar hall, there are large pictures (of small artistic merit) of all the Maratha kings, beginning with Shaji, father of Venkaji. The Sangitha Mahal, a miniature of the surviving court of Tirumala Nayak's palace in Madura is also a fine building.

"There are two of the Rajas' Chuttrams in the town, the

Sreyasi and Vennar chattrams, the former of which was founded by Rajah Sivaji in 1837, and the latter by Pratap Singh about 1749.

Extracts from Bishop Caldwell's "Records of the Early History of the Tinnevelly Mission."

"An English sergeant, whose wife is a member of our congregation, has in a manner taken the cause. A young heathen accountant had heard the truth with satisfaction.

The sergeant made him learn the five principal articles of the catechism, and then baptised him. It grieved us that he should have baptised the young man before he had attained a distinct knowledge of Christianity."—(*From Schwartz's Journals—1771.*)

"In the end of February 1778, Schwartz set out for Palamcottah in Tinnevelly, on the invitation of a European who wished to be married and who also informed him that there was in Madura there were many children to be baptised. In Tachenur he found in a native regiment fifty or sixty members of his congregation. After he had provided for their spiritual wants and examined the children in the catechism, he entered Palamcottah in the afternoon."

"As Schwartz was about to baptise some children, a young Brahmin woman came forward with her adopted son and asked for baptism. She was the widow of a Maratha Brahmin, who had been one of the King's servants at Tanjore, and after her husband's death became the concubine of an English Officer of the name of Lyttelton, who also for a time seems to have been stationed at Tanjore. She had already in Tanjore asked Schwartz for baptism, but had been refused, so long as she remained in that sinful connection. The officer got ill of gout, was faithfully nursed by her and is said to have promised her marriage, which may be the case seeing that he left her the whole of his property. Though Schwartz's

warnings to the officer himself passed unheeded, yet with strange inconsistency he instructed his concubine in Biblical histories and Christian doctrine. In a few years (in Palamcottah) she repeated her request for instruction, and as she was well reported of on all sides, instruction and baptism could not now be withheld from her. She received baptism with much emotion, and at her request was called Clarinda (Clarinda), commonly "royal Clarinda," as she belonged to a royal house. Schwartz anticipated a great impulse hereby to the spread of the Gospel, and therefore, wrote on the 4th of March from Palamcottah to Pohle in Trichinopoly. 'There is a wide field here. O let us pray for faithful labourer. May God send us such for Christ's sake, yea, may He send such labourers in troops.'

"When Pohle visited Palamcottah—invited by a European to perform a marriage—he baptised a servant of Clarinda's, his first fruit amongst the heathen. He gave him the name of John, and on this occasion bore testimony to Clarinda as follows:—"She is known as a consistent Christian, and I doubt not that she is anxious about the true welfare of her household. I have reason to rejoice that I visited her." An equally good testimony is given her by the Tranquebar Catechist who came from the Marava country soon after Schwartz, and who could not praise her sufficiently for her excellent knowledge and good example. She gave him many opportunities in her house, of conversation with heathens and Roman Catholics and added thereto 'exhortations of her own, which often produced a good effect." —(*From Germann's "Life of Schwartz."*)

"It appears, however, that the officer had promised to marry her, and in the meanwhile he instructed her in the English language and even in the principles of Christianity." —(*From Brown's History of the Propagation of Christianity.*)

From the Palamcottah Church Register of 1780: —

"Clarinda, Brahmin caste.
Sarah.
Son Henry Lyttelton.
John.
Mary."

"Clarinda continued to reside in the South of India; but about the time of the conclusion of the war (with Hyder Ali, peace in 1784), she and two Roman Catholic Christians from the same quarter of the country came to Tanjore, to visit Mr. Schwartz." —(*From Jaenicke's Memoirs.*)

"Their special object was to beg for the visit of a country priest. The Brahmin woman Clarinda also came soon after them on the same errand, and also to make over her adopted son to Schwartz's care and instruction. After waiting fruitlessly for a month, she went to Ramnad, with the two Roman Catholics, accompanied by a Paria Catechist, Visuvasi, but returned again to bring back her son to Schwartz and to beg for a country-priest. The Tranquebar Missionaries attributed little importance to her request; they also became doubtful of her in consequence of various rumours that had reached them, and intended to content themselves with sending with her Visuvasi, the least considerable and reliable of their Catechists. Schwartz regarded the matter with very different feelings, and immediately after his return sent from Tanjore the distinguished Gnanapragasam. The reports he had received sounded so auspicious that he despatched him at once in July (1784) and on this occasion at least in company with his father in-law Royappan, the country-priest.

'There were 24 persons also in Terivilai a place to the south of Palamcottah, one of several villages mortgaged to Clarinda, amongst whom were two families of Shanars, or Palmyra climbers, the firstlings of that caste.....Maria Savari

the Catechist previously appointed by Clarinda.' (*From Germann's Life of Schwartz.*)

"About the year 1783, the Brahmin convert exerted herself in the good work of building a church in the fort of Palamcottah for the use of the small flock of European and Native Christians. This was the first Church erected in connection with the Tinnevelly Mission. —*Bishop Caldwell.*

"In the meantime in January 1785 Schwartz sends to Palamcottah his much valued Catechist Satyanathan, who had long laboured so faithfully at Vallam. He gave him a letter to the Commandant of Palamcottah authorising him, in opposition to the custom of the country, to associate Pichamuthu and other members of the washerman caste with him in the performance of public worship in Palamcottah. The Commandant also gave Clarinda lime and other materials to help her in the erection of a chapel. The rest of the expense she bore herself and Schwartz could not resist her earnest request that he should come and consecrate the little Church." (*Germann's Life of Schwartz.*)

"The edifice is a neat, small building, with a tiled roof; and was built by a Brahmin woman, who was instructed and baptised by Mr. Schwartz; one or two of the English gentlemen assisting her with a supply of some materials."—(*From the Report of the S.P.C.K. for 1788.*)

"At Palamcottah, Mr. Schwartz judged more success would be experienced, as the people there have less connection with Europeans." (*—From the Report of the S.P.C.K. for 1790.*)

GLOSSARY

Avatar	an incarnation of God.
Chcnchus	a hill-tribe on the Nallamalai range.
Chuttram	a free inn for travellers.
Deepavali	a Hindu festival of lights and fire-works.
Dharma shastras	Hindu moral codes.
Dulavoy	a general; an agent.
Feringhi	a European.
Guru	a spiritual preceptor.
Hazaridar	a subordinate military officer.
Kali	the current Hindu cycle; the iron age.
Kalathra dosha	an astrological influence against life of one's wife.
Kalam	a measure for grains.
Kodangi	a class of wandering beggars who profess to forecast the future and practise witchcraft
Mantap	a public edifice usually of stone.
Mantras	holy spells; words of a ritual.
Mlechhas	non aryans; foreigner; low-caste people.
Munshi	a teacher of languages.
Nandhi	Siva's bull, famed for skill as a drummer.
Padmasana	lotus seat; a peculiar posture.
Pagoda	a temple; a gold coin.

Patasala	a Sanskrit theological seminary.
Pativrata	a duteous and ideal wife.
Prant	a revenue division under Maratha rule.
Setupati	the tittle of the Zemindar of Ramnad.
Sevvai dosha	the bad influence of Mars in astrology, acting against the life of one's consort.
Stridhana	a wife's dowry or personal property.
Tamasha	fun; festivity.
Tulsi	a sacred plant.
Unani	a system of medicine practised generally by Mohamedans.
Vasantha	the Indian spring season.

MADHAVIAH'S ENGLISH WORKS

1. THE STORY OF THE RAMAYANA

RETOLD IN A SIMPLE STRAIGHT MANNER.

With an introduction by Sir P.S. Sivaswamy Iyer, K.C.S.I., C.I.E. Dedicated with permission to H. E. the Right Honourable the Lord Pentland, P.C., G.C.I.E., Governor of Madras. Published by Macmillan &Co., Ltd., Madras with a map and glossary —XVI— 290 pp.

EXTRACTS FROM SOME OPINIONS

Sir P.S. Sivaswamy Iyer, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.: — "The moral education of the young is a problem which has come to the front in this century and has been engaging the attention of

the educational world and the public. Opinion is divided to some extent as to the possibility and advantage of direct moral instruction. A good story well-told is of greater value especially to the young than a dry statement or discussion of moral maxims. And ideals drawn from the national literature of a civilised people necessarily have a greater educative effect than those borrowed from foreign sources. No apology is therefore needed for this book which Mr. Madhaviah has written for the benefit of the school-going youth of this country. He is no novice as an author. By his fine culture and his previous essays in the field of literature, Mr. Madhaviah is well equipped for the task he has undertaken. The book is written in a pleasant, flowing and attractive style specially suited to the young reader.....he has succeeded in producing an eminently readable and delightful story which will serve to implant in youthful minds a love of the lofty ideals portrayed in the immortal epic."

Dr. Sir S. Subramania Iyer:— "No Indian youth loving his land and its ancient tradition and greatness should fail to-read and profit by this most pleasant book."

The Hon'ble Mr. V.S. Srinivasa Sastry:—"Teachers throughout India will find in it an effective means not only of teaching English composition, but of training the emotions and inculcating high ideals of duty."

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice T.V. Seshagiri Iyer:— "The English garb in which Mr. Madhaviah has clothed his tale should enable Indian Managers of aided institutions to prescribe its study as part of the course of instruction in their schools. The English of the book is excellent and there is absolutely no trace of sectarianism in it. Mr. Madhaviah has done excellent service to the cause of religious education in this country by bringing out this book."

The Rev. Dr. William Miller, C.I.E.:— ".....Such acquaintance as I have thus made with the volume enables

me to say that I think you have written in a style very suitable for the purpose in view, and I am satisfied that the book as a whole will prove interesting and useful "

The Rev. Dr. Willam Skinner:— ".....! should be glad to see it recognised by the educational authorities."

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Prof. K.B. Ramanathan, M. A., B.L., L.T.: — "..... It is bound to take its place among the permanent literary possessions of our boys of the High School classes. I shall not be surprised if it gets prescribed as one of the 'non-detailed' books of the English Department of students qualifying for the school leaving certificate ..... as good an English classic in its way as Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare....."

Principal K. Ganapathi lyer of the Kallikota -College:— "..... in every way a very suitable book for non-detailed study by pupils of our 5th and 6th forms....."

Principal I. Srinivasa Iyer of the Tinnevelly Hindu College:— "..... I should like to seethe work in the hands of every High School boy."

The Hon'ble Mr. L.D. Swamikannu Pillay, M.A., B.L.:— "..... I read it through and must say its spirit is as good as its English."

The Rev. G.H. Lamb: — ".....This is certainly a book-to be read by all Western lovers of India."

The Madras Mail:— ".....The story is told in a simple and straightforward manner, and in easy flowing English, being, mainly intended for students....."

The Modern Review: — "It is just the book for boys to-read..... The book fills a real gap and should prove highly useful to students all over India....."

The New India: — ".....The free and easy manner of narration adds clearness to the simple and chaste expression of language....."

II. THILLAI GOVINDAN

A POSTHUMOUS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

EXTRACTS FROM SOME OPINIONS

Frederic Harrison:— "Those who would know what is the inner life of the vast mass of our Indian fellow-subjects should read this remarkable little book. It is beautifully written, in quaint pathetic English.....it is a fascinating picture of the contrasts and confusions of Hindu antiquity suddenly plunged into the whirlpool of modern Europe."

Sri F.A. Nicholson, K.C.S.I., I.C.S.:— ".....I was greatly taken up by the autobiography which reveals so much of the difficulties and doubts of the modern educated Indian, with which Englishmen, who have spent many years in the country and with the people, must feel so much sympathy.....the book is most interesting....."

R.E. Holland, I.C.S:— "I have read it with very great interest. It is the only book I have come across which gives one a real insight into native life."

K.C. (M.C.S.) :— "One of the most remarkable books ever written by an Indian.....To few Indians is it given to write with so much force and feeling, and I would add, humour."

The Madras Christian College Magazine: — "Whoever wrote this had genius. It is the most life-like picture of modern Indian life that it has been our fortune to meet.....Repeatedly recalls Thackeray to one's mind....."

The Indian Ladies' Magazine:— "Solid literary work of a very advanced kind..... exposes ruthlessly the hollowness of certain aspects of present-day Indian society. The work is

very cleverly written.....and is such to make the reader set thinking over present-day social and moral problems in India.....Should find readers all over India by the publication of a remarkable book—*Thillai Govindan,* full of life-like pictures of modern Indian life."

The Indian Social Reformer: ... "There is orginality and even daring in the form which the author has adopted in setting forth some of his deepest convictions ....it is one of the most scathing exposures of the hollowness and insincerity of much which passes for religion and morality among us....."

The Educational Review:— "... It purposes to lay bare the workings of the Hindu mind both before and after the liberalizing and progressive forces of the age have begun to play upon it..... —all these are portrayed with admirable delicacy of touch and great fidelity to fact. A subtle irony pervades the whole work and gives it the character of a satire. As a piece of literature, it is worthy of high rank; the literary power displayed in it is much above the common, and the author deserves the thanks of his countrymen for this remarkable production."

The Indian Review.— ".....From this unvarnished narrative of the experiences of a cultured and thoughtful man, the powers that he may derive many useful hints and suggestions, which, if accepted, would undoubtedly tend to the improvement of the machinery of Government, and the educated classes will be able to gather a true picture of the real causes of the failure which so often blasts their careers and aspirations."

The Bombay Gazette:— "The development of Govindan as very cleverly described by himself and the reader is naively let into the secrets of this typical soul. ....."

The Central Hindu College Magazine: — "An interesting little book ..... It is exceedingly well written in terse and vigorous English.....The story is a typical one.....It should

find many readers."

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Christian Literature Society's Quarterly Bulletin—".....The Missionary will be provided with food for thought as he reads these well-written pages."

III. SATYANANDA

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IV. POEMS

(1) "Reflect the new spirit that has been awakened in the people of India." (2) "If English is to be the language of India, few if any books yet written give more promise for the future of Indian poetry than this."

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I. PADMAVATI CHARITRAM — a story of the Tamil country—both parts together—well illustrated.

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III. MUTHUMEENAKSHI — the autobiography of a

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The late Sir K. Seshadri Iyer, K.C.S.I.:— "It gives me much pleasure to go through it."

Justice Sir S Subramania Iyer, K.C.I.E.:— "The interesting Tamil novel *Padmavati Charitram.*"

Mr. K.C.B. Kumarakula Singh Mudaliar, Tamil Interpreter to H.E. the Governor of Ceylon:— "I have read with much interest *Padmavati Charitram*..... The story is instructive and well constructed....."

Mr. E.W. Senatharaja, Bar-at-law, Colombo:— "".....Lifelike and highly interesting ..... The language is simple, the style clear and terse, the tone of morality elevated....."

The Awakened India: "Padmavati Charitram is entitled to a decent position, not only among Tamil novels that have yet

appeared, but also among English ones of the same kind..... ..... The style is usually dignified and free from pedantry. There is no diffusiveness or languor and some of the descriptions are done with great skill. On the whole we have no hesitation in pronouncing it a decided success and no reader will grudge to spend a few pleasant and profitable hours over it. ....."

The Ceylon Independent:— "The *Padmavati Charitram* is perhaps the first Tamil contribution towards high class vernacular fiction in Tamil India .....This is the first Tamil novel thoroughly modern in its nature..... Even the style is modern, for it is not the Tamil of the great masters, nor colloquial either. It is a style for the million. .....The story is interesting, instructive, well-told in good language and tastefully presented."

OTHELLO

The Madras Mail :— "The laudable task..... The translation is remarkably true to the original and has been made in a very intelligible and interesting style."

The Hindu:—"The translation, on the whole, is clear and readable and reflects much credit on the author... The translator's foot-notes explaining difficult passages are bound to help the Tamil reader to whom some of the ideas expressed in the play may be new.... The translator has taken much pains to make the book really useful and deserves encouragement....."

The Madras Christian College Magazine:—"The difficulties attending such a task are great enough to have deterred the stoutest hearts. But Mr. Madhaviah's attempt has been on the whole a success. He has a simple, charming and dignified style, which brings out with great skill the spirit of the original. It may be said to his credit, that the force, suggestiveness, brevity and different shade of meaning, suffer

less than might have been expected.... The author has added foot-notes which made the meaning clear and easily understood. If the work meet with the success it deserves, and inspire the author to further efforts in this direction, a great deal might be done by way of bringing the East and West together, in sympathy and admiration for the master-singer of England—nay of the world....."

VIJAYAMARTHANDAM

The Madras Mail:— "The story is a very original and delightful one, and the style of writing is in every way worthy of the author who has achieved a reputation for dignified diction...."

The Hindu: — "It deals with the ways and means of some of our Zemindars and exposes them very effectively....."

The C.C. Magazine: — "The author is a good story-teller and writes in an easy style free from all pedantry and affectation....."

TIRUMALAI SETUPATI

The Indian Patriot : — "....Mr. A. Madhaviah has produced a Tamil drama giving a vivid picture of the manners and customs of the ancient—Tamil Kingdoms..... 'Tirumalai Setupati' must be considered as one of the master-pieces in the Tamil Dramatic Literature, and we would strongly urge our Tamil countrymen to read this remarkable book."

PODHU DHARMA SATGITA MANJARI

The Hon. Mr. Justice T.V. Seshagiri Iyer (in the perface):— "I would recommend a study of this book to all those who say that the Tamil language is not capable of being adapted to popularise modern ideas—the songs relate to various topics—civic life, patriotism, industrial development,

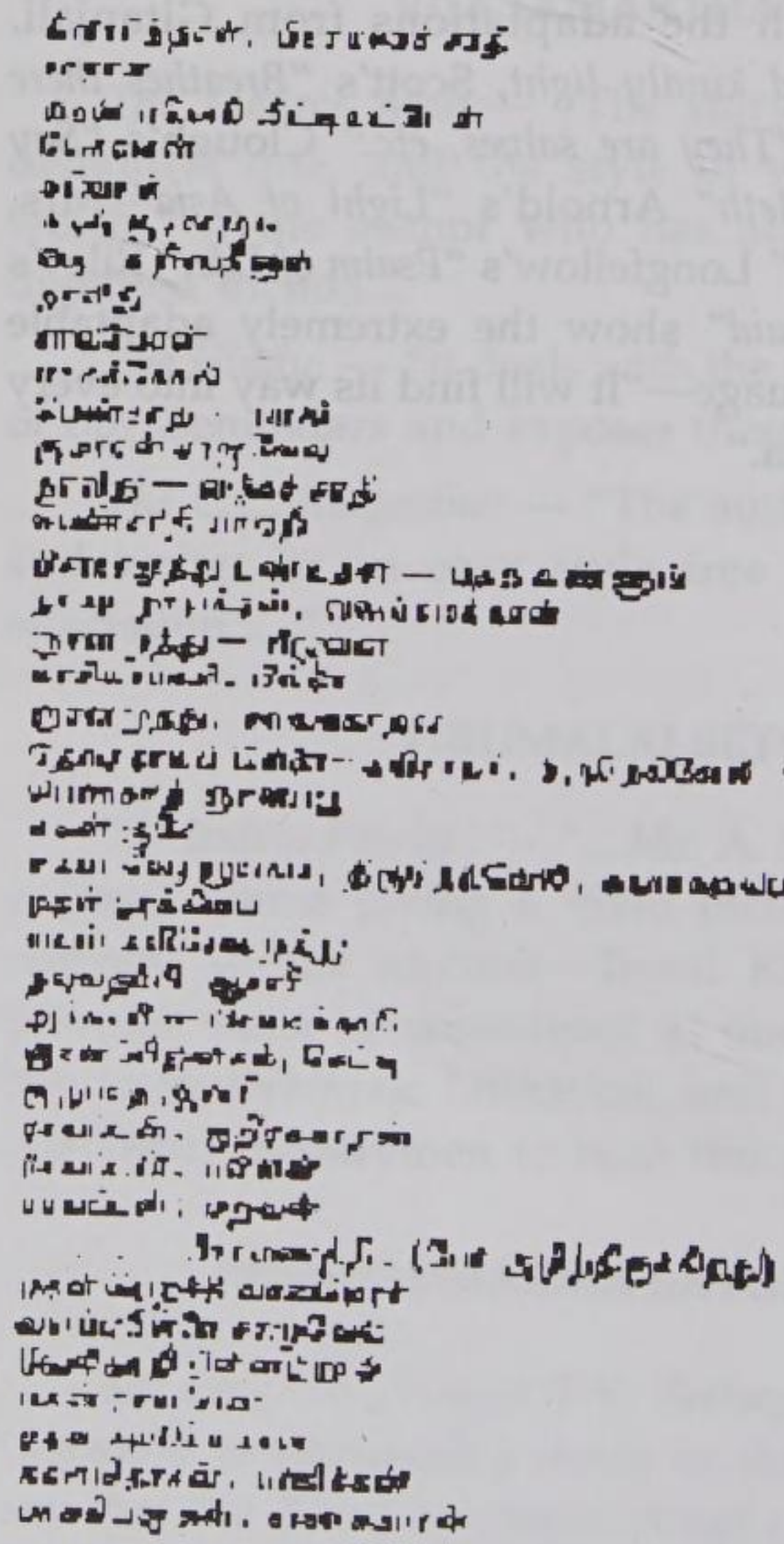
marriage reform, elevation of the depressed classes, etc. The importance of the collection consists in the fact that they deal with topics which have not hitherto appealed to Tamil poets, and which have an intimate bearing upon the daily lives of men and women. To our womankind the poems have a special interest. ...I commend the-book heartily—1 hope it will find its way into every household in Southern India."

The Hindu:—"The songs relate to a variety of topics—and these together with the adaptations from Gitanjali. Cardinal Newman's *Lead kindly light,* Scott's *"Breathes there the man,"* etc. Lowell's *"They are salves, etc."* Clough's *"Say not the struggle not availeth"* Arnold's *"Light of Asia"* Mrs. Santhag's *"Never say Fail,"* Longfellow's *"Psalm of Life,"* Riley's *"Let something good be said"* show the extremely adaptable genius of the Tamil Language—"It will find its way into every household in South India."

APPENDIX 2

TINNEVELLY MISSION REGISTER, CHRISTIANS IN PALAMCOTTAH IN 1780—

Palamcottah Church Register of 1780—reproduced from Records of the Early History of the Tinnevelly Mission Pages 9-12 by the Right Reverend R. Caldwell, D.D., L.L.D.



The spelling of the original has been preserved — R. Caldwell.

English translation of the Palamcotta Church Register of 1780

Clorinda, Brahmin caste
Sarah
Son Henry Lyttellon
John
Mary
Daughter Susanna
do Christina
David
Solomon
Pascal
Wife Polly
Son Samuel
David, Vadugu caste
Wife Patti
Pitchaimuthu Panditan, Washerman
Nagalanayakan, Valangaimattan (Paraiyan)
Gnanamuttu, Iluvan
Masilamani Pillai
Gnanamuttu, Savalakaran
Devasahayam Pillai, Poet, Tinnevelly, 50
Wife Gnanappu
Daughter Suse
Son Vedanayakam, Tinnevelly, Gangaikulam
Daughter Bakyam
Son Suvishesh amuttu
Nallatambi Achari (Carpenter)
Akkayi, beggar
Gnanapragasam, Chetti
Gurubatha Achari
Rayappan, Horse-keeper
Rayappan, Pallan
Rayappan, Maravan
A Brahmin woman, Name erased
Daughter Betsy Lawley Moore (?)

Adopted son Samuel
Servant Chinnammal
Son Rayappan
Daughter Savariammal
Swamidasan, Panikan
Pakyanathan, Savalakaran

The Register, from which the foregoing extract is taken extends from the year 1780 to June 1803. R. Caldwell.

APPENDIX 3

LETTER FROM SRINIVASA SASTRI

Servants of India Society
Poona City 26/12/13

My dear Madhaviah,

At last I have finished 'Clarinda'. I did it on my way to this place. I had read the greater part of the first Book some weeks before. The rest I did at one stretch, being unable to put it down, so interested I was.

In fact I gave up making notes and inconsequential criticisms at an early stage. Few are the words I have to say by way of suggestion. And I wish I could praise your work enough. If it be my good fortune to review it for some paper, I will give it its due.

You have made excellent use of your material. I have read an account or two of the *sati* sacrifice and dimly recall one where a scene took place of the kind you have in your book. Most readers, however, in our time without the knowledge of the immediate past, may feel their sense of probability somewhat strained. So with respect to the incident of the snake poison being sucked out by a European. I confess I can't believe it of a British soldier of the 18th century, esp. in connexion with an Indian girl, tho' the soldier be Lyttelton and the girl, Claviranda. One can't judge in a dogmatic way from one's narrow and humdrum experience, and I fully realise how narrowly I am saved from pronouncing the intrigue of Kamala Bai to convict Madhava and the heroine together to be too diabolical to be true. About ten years ago I heard of a happening among my friends that greatly enlarged my idea of female wickedness. But the brothers, the astrologer and the Amatya, you might have given some

redeeming touch to their character. Surely every man made in God's image has some vestige or rudiment of his origin left in him: between the two, the Amatya is the more repulsive figure. Nowhere do you rouse the slightest sympathy for him. Iago is a difficult model.

I should hesitate to extend the psychology of love as we read it in Englishmen and English women to Indian life. In places that is what you seem to have done, and I frequently asked myself, 'Is this true of us?' Once more I defer to your superior knowledge and artistic instinct. My knowledge of women is next to *nil*.

The hero and heroine are to me warm with life, with enough idealism to make them attractive, whatever one may think of the incidents that are fated to knit their lives. Unconventional bringing up such as gave tone and spring to Clarinda's mind and heart was perhaps possible in the days of the Tanjore Raj when room could yet be found for adventure. That without English education she could early bring a fresh mind to bear on the characters of legend and the perplexing problems of actual life around her is proof to me, welcome beyond words, that in indigenous culture at its best, you still discover the elements of courage, freshness of outlook and virility of purpose so necessary to progress. Of course Clarinda's culmination as a social worker was possible in those days only under Christian influence. I long for the time, not very distant, I trust, when it would be compatible with the respectability of an Indian grihini. When the story is translated into Tamil, a new purpose in life might be added to a woman's ideal and transform some well-to-do widows at least into sisters of mercy. Somehow I cannot help feeling that the development of Clarinda's fate has a faint likeness to that of Romola. I honour and respect her, and devoutly wish that she might inspire the lives of our women for some generations.

Lyttelton began by being too much of the conventional

hero but towards the end ripened into a really likeable character. I am almost glad he took to drink in his remorse; else his end would not be so exquisitely instructive as it is, dripping, so to say, with life's richest experience—a sense of having wronged your dearest, and true but unavailing penitence. God's mercy and grace are for such and such only.

Reminiscences, literary and other, are suggested in every line of your book and altogether you have put into it the lessons of a fairly ripe and wide experience. Largely of your way of thinking, I have at every step derived confirmation of my view and therefore felt real pleasure. But I can easily see how it will offend the orthodox and reactionary type of mind.

In my hurry now, I will allow myself only one criticism. Your habit of using well-known quotations sometimes carries you too far. To speak of the undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns and nature's soft nurse is to come very near the school-boy's standard.

The transliteration of your Sanskrit words will require careful proof reading. I am returning the MSS today.

I must thank you for the long rope you have given me, tho' I have not hung myself with it. Let me assure you I have desired to read the story every day since I took it. But the hour did not strike until the 24th inst! I am grateful for the honour you did me by asking me to look into the book - and always I feel thankful that amongst my friends I had betimes the good fortune to number you.

Affectionately yours,

Srinivasan (Srinivasa Sastri)

APPENDIX 4

LETTER FROM WILLIAM MILLER

111 Grosvenor Street
Edinburgh
7/12/16

My dear Madhaviah,

... I was anticipating some pleasure from the arrival of the parcel mentioned in your letter though I had read already some of your short stories from our friend Kandaswami's paper. I am sorry to say however that the parcel has never come and I suppose that it must have been lost in the sinking of the 'Arabia' and her mails by our brutal enemies.

Now it is quite beyond my power to add much more to what I have said already about 'Clarinda' but since you have asked me to do so I shall try to say a little more. There might be other remarks which I might make if time and strength were available but here is my central remark and perhaps the only bit of not quite favourable criticism which I should in any case be inclined to make.

Is in not a little questionable whether Clarinda would have felt herself so much degraded by the peculiar marriage relation with the Englishman whom she regarded as her lawful husband? What is said about his feelings concerning his conduct in this matter is well and truly said. But, considering Clarinda's upbringing in the midst of a society which holds it to be allowable and at times even honourable and necessary for a man to have more than one wife, would she have had such a strong feeling of shame and wrong as you attribute to her? Would a Hindu lady in her situation have felt herself so terribly dishonoured when the truth was disclosed to her? I commend these questions to your

consideration and this is literally all that is now in my power to say about the book.

If you find it really convenient to send a copy of the book you have now on the stocks I shall do the little that I can in the way of considering it. I am glad that *Thillai Govindan* is to appear in this country. You probably know from Narayanan that I tried but failed to get Fisher Unwin to take it up. I hope that the English edition will not contain the reference to me by name and surname to which I objected long ago.

I am really sorry to know what you say about the financial outcome of your literary work. I cannot offer advice as to the course you ought to follow, but I think I am entitled to say that as far as I can judge your writings have always seemed to me to be in the main beneficial to your country.

Now it costs me some effort to get a decent letter written and I cannot make this one any longer. I close it with all possible good wishes for you and yours, for your restoration to health and for the success of your writings.

Yours very truly,

William Miller

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Notes on the Text

I have tried to locate all the quotations that Madhaviah uses so liberally, but have not always been successful.

The historical material in Book I depends greatly on the *Tanjore Gazetteer* by Hemingway, and of Book III on the *Records of the Early History of the Tinnevelly Mission* by Bishop Caldwell. These sources are quoted in the 'Historical Notes' that Madhaviah appended to the text.

1. Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, Book 6, The Churchyard among the Mountains, lines 1069 ff. The epigraph throws light on how Madhaviah viewed the story of Clarinda and Lyttelton: a human and tragic story of a man and woman who might have erred, but who suffered greatly for it.
2. Srinivasa Sastri, 1869-1946: President of the political and reform movement, Servants of India; member of the Madras Legislative Council; elected to the Central Legislature in 1916.
3. 'Unarchi taan natpaang kizhamai tarum': *Tirukkural*, verse 785. 'Without mutual understanding, there can be no friendship.'
4. 'Nor was yours the least of the opinions': Srinivasa Sastri's comments on *Clarinda* have been appended. See Appendix 3.
5. 'The walls have been buttressed' : In January 1914, the Chaplain of Clarinda's church, P. Fotherdill wrote to Madhaviah, clearly in answer to an enquiry about its current state, 'I am sorry to say that last December's rains were too heavy for the old structure and it fell, a mass of ruins.' Fotherdill was hoping to build a new structure and asked for contributions. Madhaviah's response is pencilled on the back of the letter, we do not know whether it was actually sent. 'I shall be glad to contribute to its repair and I think the old buttressed up walls ought to be kept up and a filler roof alone put up as before. But surely the Protestants at Palamcottah are not so lacking in reverence for the memory of their first benefactress as to let me, a heathen help in the matter. It would be far better if the church is included in a list of historical monuments.'
6. 'He who tells nothing...' from Johnson's Preface to 'Voyage to Abyssinia by Lobo, a Portuguese Jesuit' which Johnson translated from French into English. 'Life of Johnson', Boswell, The World's Classics, p. 63.
7. *Hamlet*, Act V, sc 2, line 1.
8. G.R. Malleson, *Dupleix*, pp. 56-57 (Rulers of India Series. Oxford University Press, 1892). Malleson continues, 'Thenceforward the

alliance of the Europeans came to be sought by every pretender to dominion. The revolution had been effected by the genius of Dupleix... it was only requisite that the war with the English should continue and he should have a free hand. The rest he would care for.' Although the battle of St. Thome does not feature in *Clarinda*, Madhaviah begins his story at this point, which he sees as crucial in South Indian politics. The sub-theme of the whole of Book I is the confrontation between the East and the West, the shift in power from the Indian princes to the French and the English, and the ultimate conquest by the English. The history of Tanjore is seen against this background, and the life of the protagonist, Clarinda, is marked by the chief events that happen in Tanjore.

9. Havaldar: Among the Marathas, the commander of a fort; later a non-commissioned officer corresponding to a sergeant.
10. Naik: a native captain of some sort, later a non-commissioned officer corresponding to a corporal (Hobson-Jobson).
11. chuttram: see Madhaviah's glossary. All his glosses have been retained in italics in this text.
12. The Great Maravas: The Maravas were traditionally hunters and fighters and are mentioned as early as in the Tamil Sangam poetry (from AD 200 onwards). By the 14th century they owned powerful chiefdoms in Ramnad, they served in the armies of the Madurai Nayakas, and became the chief foes of Tanjore. In 1725, the Maravas were divided as to who would be their chief Lord, or Sethupati. The Maratha Rajas of Tanjore and the Madurai Nayakas of Trichinopoly took opposite sides in the dispute. Tanjore won, and placed their protege on the throne. In 1730 the Maravar kingdom of Ramnad was divided into three portions, one of which was retained by Tanjore. This area, (north of the Pambanar) continued to be contested by Tanjore and the Maravas. Madhaviah's Historical Notes (p.247) excerpts from F.R. Hemingway, *Madras District Gazetteers: Tanjore*, p. 43 (Government Press, Madras, 1915).
13. Sethupati: From the 5th century, the temple at Rameswaram (also called Sethu) was under the protection and patronage of the Maravar chiefs who assumed the title of Sethupati, chiefs who were the lords of Sethu (Burton Stein, *New Cambridge history of India*, Vol. I, 2, *Vijayanagara*, p. 135; Cambridge University Press, 1989).
14. Dulavoy: Madhaviah glosses 'a general: an agent'. Hobson-Jobson gives 'commander-in chief of an army'.
15. Tukoji Maharaja's natural son: Tukoji reigned from 1729-1736. He had five sons, of whom the third and fourth died before their father, while the youngest, Pratap was illegitimate. The eldest, Bava Singh ruled for two years after his father, and then died. He was followed

by his widow, who ruled for a further two years. After this, Tukoji's second son Sayyaji ruled briefly, but was ousted by a pretender, Shahji or Kattu Raja. Sayyji, in temporary exile, entered into negotiation with the French, ceding Karaikal to them, in return for aid. However, he succeeded in ousting his rival without their help, and re-establishing himself as king of Tanjore. Soon after this, a palace revolution deposed him a second time, and Pratap was placed on the throne (*Tanjore Gazetteer*, pp. 44-5; see Madhaviah's notes on p. 247-8).

16. Pradhanji: Prime Minister (see p. 7).
17. Kalla/Kallar: Soldierly clansmen, mostly from the principality of Pudukottai. Kallar chiefs served other royal households in the southern peninsula, including the Sethupati and the Tanjore kings (Burton Stein, pp. 136-7).
18. Venkoji (sometimes called Ekoji), son of Shahji the Bijapur Maratha general, and brother of the great Shivaji, established the Maratha dynasty in Tanjore, about the year 1674.
19. Shivaji and Afzul Khan: Afzul (or Afzal) Khan, was the general sent by Bijapur against Shivaji in 1659. He was persuaded into meeting Shivaji for negotiation, each with only one companion. Shivaji fell at Afzal Khan's feet, and when raised up, stabbed him with 'tiger claws'.
20. Kali and Mahishasura: When the buffalo-demon Mahishasura harassed the gods, Devi was created out of all the energies of the gods (or in another version, was given all their weapons). She succeeded in slaying the asura.
21. Mankoji: Historical character, the general of the Tanjore rajas, who played an important part in Tanjore history and in the battles against Chanda Saheb etc.
22. Dharma shastras: Madhaviah glosses 'Hindu moral codes'. The term is especially applicable to the laws of Manu and the other sages who first recorded the smriti or 'recollection' of what they had received from a divine source.
23. 'The birth of a grand-daughter': We have no official record of Clarinda's date of birth. Madhaviah makes it 1746, to coincide with the Battle of St Thome, and the Tanjore losses in Ramnad which immediately made her an orphan.
24. 'Let she be named Clavirunda Bai': There is no record of Clarinda's original name, before she was baptized. Paul Kadambavanam in *Origin of the Tinnevelly Diocese* (1967) suggests that her original name was Kokila, but no grounds are given for this claim, (see D. Packiamuthu 'Royal Clarinda', unpublished article, 1993). Madhaviah concocts the name of the town, Clavirundapuram, and of the girl named for its fall.

25. The Pattukotta prant was conquered by us sixty years ago' (i.e. in 1686): An inscription in the Pattukotta fort states that the general of king Shahji (son and successor of the founder of the Tanjore Maratha dynasty, Venkoji) conquered all the Pattukottai territory as far as the Pambanar. But this area was regained by the Maravar (*Tanjore Gazetteer*, p.43).
26. 'sixteen years since': i.e. in 1730, when the Marava kingdom was divided into three (see note 12). The three parts were the Sivagariga and the Ramnad zamindaris, and the strip north of the Pambanar which was retained by Tanjore (but which continued to be disputed).
27. The Nawab: i.e. of Arcot. The Nawab of Arcot and his immediate superior, the Nizam of Hyderabad were as liege lords over all the smaller southern states.
28. Tirumala Naik at the Nawab's court: The Nayaka Queen Regent, Minakshi (at Trichinopoly) and Vangaru Tirumala (at Madurai) were engaged in a struggle for power at this time. After two years of negotiations, Chanda Saheb, acting on behalf of his uncle, the Nawab of Arcot, Dost Ali, took possession of both Trichinopoly and Madurai in 1736, thus putting an end to the line of the Madurai Nayakas.
29. Pandit Rao is determined to hold the view that Tanjore is an independent principality with its own feudatories. Mankoji already knows that Tanjore's fate depends on the Nawab and his European supporters.
30. 'Our own suzerain to whom we pay an annual tribute': from 1691 the descendants of Venkoji, first of the Maratha rajas of Tanjore, held Tanjore as feudatories of the Mughal, paying an annual tribute to him. The local representative of the Mughal Emperor was the Nawab of Arcot; immediately superior to him was the Nizam of Hyderabad who, in theory, was the subordinate of the Emperor. 'It was largely the failure to pay this tribute that in latter times caused trouble between the king of Tanjore and the Nawab of Arcot, the sole representative of the Moghuls' (*Tanjore Gazetteer*, p. 42).
31. 'the usurper': i.e., Shahji, pretended nephew of Tukoji, who usurped the throne from Sayyaji.
32. Syed Saiyid: all the revolutions in Tanjore, between the deaths of Bava Sigh, eldest son of Tukoji, in 1737, and the final fall of Sayyaji and the crowning of Pratap are sometimes ascribed to a Mohammedan general, Sayyid or Saiyid.
33. *sati*: Sati was the daughter of Daksha, and wife of Rudra (Siva); she died or killed herself because of a quarrel between her father and her husband, and the consequent insult to her husband. The name was conferred to any widow who immolated herself on her

husband's funeral pyre, and thus attained divine status.

34. 'pativrata': faithful and devoted wife. The reference to Clarinda's parents' happy marriage and her mother's death as a true 'sati' prefigures the *sati* theme in the novel, and contrasts with Clarinda's own unhappy and unequal marriage, and the *sati* that is enforced upon her.

35. 'a beautiful girl, about three years of age': The date is 1749 (the year that Pratap Singh established the Vennar Chuttram, see p.253). The chronology of the novel is very carefully worked out to fit in with historical events, and the passage of time is indicated in hints such as this. The device of the Havaldar's chance meeting with Ramasastrulu enables Madhaviah to fill in the narrative.

36. 'he would not speak to the Senapati on my behalf: Madhaviah is at pains to establish Pandit Rao's total integrity.

37. Srisailam and its legends: Srisailam was an important city during the Vijayanagara period. The Mallikarjuna temple on the banks of the Krishna dates from the 14th century; its origins are obscure, possibly Buddhist. The walls surrounding the temple date from 1456. The outer face is richly decorated with carved figures including a portrait of Krishna Deva Raya who visited the temple in 1514, and made rich gifts to it (see K. Nilakanta Shastri, *A history of South India*, p. 281, Oxford University Press, Madras, 1966).
The monastery of Srisailam and the surrounding hermitages were once famous for their Siddhas. Sadhus and sages continue to live in the caves here. The river at the bottom of the gorge is said to be the Patala Ganga, the underground Ganga, one of the rare places where it reaches the surface. It is said to have remarkable purifying properties.
The extended meditation, a direct intervention by the author, is curious. The reflection on the vanity of man, kings and gods; the passing away of all things; the insignificance of all human events in the face of eternity—all this stands a little apart both from Pandit Rao's perspective and from Lyttleton's, in the conversation between these two men that follows.

38. The article Madhaviah refers to cannot be traced, but a similar piece on Tripurantakam (considered the eastern gateway to Srisailam) was published in the *Madras Christian College Magazine*, Feb. 1903, vol. xx, pp. 408-12.

39. The sannyasi (Pandit Rao), speaking of the vanity of human ambitions and desires, is referring to his own past, and to his ambitions for his son. Having renounced the world, he is contemplating God and Nature alone.

40. 'Man is the noblest and greatest of God's creatures': The Englishman's position is meant to contrast with that of the

sannyasi's. It is a post-Enlightenment position, based on the belief in the perfectibility of Man; it is also a Christian position, based on the belief that Man is created by God in his image.

41. Bhramaravati: There are several versions of this story, both in the Puranic and tribal (Chenchu) variations. In one version, Chandravati, daughter of Chandragupta, refused all suitors declaring herself the bride of Shiva, and went to live on Srisailam where she worshipped the linga with fresh jasmine flowers. Moved by her grace and devotion, Shiva changed himself into Mallikarjuna (White jasmine) and Chandravati into Bhramarambha, the bee-Mother. The incest theme on which Madhaviah's version is based is not explicit in stories I have read, although one of them certainly hints at it.
42. Lyttelton: The name of the Englishman who is connected with Clarinda is first mentioned by Germann and quoted by Bishop Caldwell. The missionary records refer to him again and again as 'an English officer'. Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate the name among the lists of the company officers during the period 1760-75. Nor is his name listed among the graves. But the records are not complete for this period, and Palayamkottai did not then have a church.
43. In 1748 the Nizam-ul-mulk died. Nazir Jung, the second son assumed power in Hyderabad. But Muzaffar Jung, a favourite grandson contested Nazir Jung's claim. Following this, the French, Muzaffar Jung and Chanda Saheb formed an alliance against the British, Nazir Jung and Anwaruddin.
44. Battle of Ambur: Sayyaji, Pratap Singh's predecessor had invited the Marathas in 1740 to come to the aid of Tanjore, against Dost Ali who was then the Nawab of Arcot. The Marathas occupied Trichinopoly, defeated and killed Dost Ali, and took Chanda Saheb prisoner. They held him until 1749, when they released him, partly through the influence of Dupleix. Chanda Saheb then joined the French and Muzaffar Jung in a battle for the sovereignty over the Carnatic. This campaign ended in the Battle of Ambur (1749), in which Anwaruddin, claiming under Nazir Jung was defeated and killed, and Chanda Saheb became the Nawab of Arcot, nominated by Muzaffar Jung (see Madhaviah's notes on p.249).
    Immediately after the Battle of Ambur, the first operation of the new Nawab (as Chanda Saheb now styled himself), was to march against Tanjore, in revenge. Pratap procrastinated skilfully, protracting negotiations until the arrival of Nazir Jung. However, he was forced meanwhile, to give Chanda Saheb a bond for 46 lakhs of rupees.
45. Devicotta: Nine years after Sayyaji, Prataps's predecessor, was deposed, he applied to the Madras government to restore him to the

throne of Tanjore. They agreed to do so in 1749, provided he ceded to them the fort and territory of Devicotta on the mouth of the Coleroon, and also paid the costs if the war. Two expeditions were sent by the British, the second successfully led by Stringer Lawrence, and accompanied by the young Clive. Devicotta was indeed ceded to the English, but Sayyaji was not restored, and fades out of history at this point. The English made a settlement with Pratap instead (see Madhaviah's notes, pp. 248-9).

46. 'pretender to the throne': it is not clear whether Sayyaji (Tukoji's second son) or Shahji (the pretended nephew) is meant here.
47. 'two rival Nawabs': of Arcot, Chanda Saheb, and Muhammad Ali son of Anwaruddin who died at Ambur.
48. 'a beautiful little girl of five years' : the date is now 1751.
49. Manambuchavadi: one of Tanjore's main residential areas, to the south-east.
50. Vallam is a fortified town, seven miles from Tanjore.
51. Brihadiswara: The great Shiva temple at Tanjore, completed by Rajaraja Chola about 1009 is dedicated to Brihadiswara.
52. Vidyaranya: 'Forest of learning', a title of Madhvacharya, the celebrated Vaisnavite scholar and teacher, a patron of Vidyanagara, afterwards altered to Vijayanagara, capital of the great Vijayanager dynasty.
53. 'I thought it necessary to enlist the sympathy and goodwill of the people': 'The authority of Pratap Singh depended to some extent on popular suffrage, and in conciliating his supporters, he seems to have lost immensely in real power.' *Tanjore Gazetteer*, p.52.
54. The debt is never repaid. The charities are not founded and the village (part of Clarinda's stridhana property) is never given to her.
55. The quotation is from M. Monier Williams, *Sakoontala or the lost ring: an Indian drama translated into English prose and verse from the Sanskrit of Kalidasa*, p.139 (Hertford, 1855). Madhaviah did not himself read Sanskrit.

    Clarinda's reading is surprisingly modern and prefigures recent feminist readings of Sakuntala. 'In his rejection of her, Dusyanta is uncomplimentary about women, whom he describes as designing, shrewd, and with an untaught cunning, such as that of the cuckoo laying her egg in another's nest' (Romila Thapar, *Sakuntala: texts, readings, histories*, p. 73. Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1999).
56. 'Barely twelve yet': the date is 1758.
57. Bhartrihari: celebrated poet and grammarian, said to be the brother of Vikramaditya of Ujjain. He wrote the three satakas: *Sringara-sataka, Niti-sataka and Vairagya-sataka*. (translated into English by Professor Tawney)

58. 'Death into the world and all our woe': Opening lines of Milton's *Paradise Lost*:

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world and all our woe...

Madhaviah cannot resist the quotation though it is impossible that Pandit Rao would know Milton.

59. The reference is from the *Manu Smriti*, Chapter 5, verse 148:

Baaiye piturvashe tishteth paanigraahasya yauvane
putranaam bharthari prethe na bhajet stri swatantrataam

(A woman must live under the control of her father while she is a child and a husband while she is a young woman, and, once her husband dies, under the control of her sons. Woman is not free or, literally, do not proclaim that woman is free.)

60. Damayanti: Wife of Nala, heroine of the story of Nala and Damayanti.
Rukmini: Daughter of the king of Vidarbha, she was sought in marriage by Krishna, and became his principal wife.
Usha: A Daitya princess who fell in love with someone she saw in a dream, and who turned out to be Aniruddha, grandson of Krishna.
Malati: Heroine of a play, *Malati-Madhava* by Bhavabhuti. Subhadra: Sister of Krishna, wife of Arjuna.
Savitri: Wife of Satyavan, whose life she saved by pleading with Yama, god of Death.
All these women married the men of their choice, displaying courage, independence and loyalty. See Srinivasa Sastri's letter: 'That without English education, she could early bring a fresh mind to bear on the characters of legend and the perplexing problems of life around her is proof to me, welcome beyond words, that in indigenous culture at its best you still discover the elements of courage, freshness of outlook and virility of purpose, so necessary to progress.' (Appendix 3)

61. Thus is it that burning remorse must ever follow
rash actions which might have been avoided, and for
which one has oneself to blame.
Not hastily should marriage be contracted
And especially in secret. Many a time
In hearts that know each others' fancies
Fond love is changed into most bitter hate.

(*Monier Williams*, p.141.)

Once again, Clarinda's gloss on the lines that the couple should

know and love each other before marriage is precociously 'modern' for her time.

62. When the seven year war between the British and the French broke out in 1756, the general, Comte de Lally was sent by the French government to fight the English in India. He arrived in Pondicherry in 1758. 'He neither knew nor cared anything about the customs of the country and made no effort to restrain his violent temper,' (Vincent Smith, *Oxford history of India*, p. 480, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1919). Tanjore was the first to suffer from the renewed hostilities between the French and the English. The French had acquired the bond for 46 lakh rupees which Pratap Singh gave Chanda Saheb in 1749, and Lally marched into Tanjore to claim it (see Madhaviah's notes on p. 251).
63. 'Is there not a prophetic figure?': see also the next paragraph, arid Pandit Rao's explanation. The Pandit is portrayed as never giving in to needless superstition. *Tanjore Gazetteer* (p. 270) describes this curious figure among the other figures on the north side of the temple (see also Madhaviah's notes on p. 253).
64. Robert Clive. (The portrait of Lyttelton owes something to the historical Clive, his physical bravery and military initiative.)
65. 'In this very town of Tiruvarur, a righteous king': Manunidhi Chola, renowned since Sangam times, in classical Tamil Literature, for his righteousness and justice.
66. Tondaman: Pandit Rao means the Kallar chiefs from the principality of Tondaman, who, along with the Sethupati of Ramnad fought alongside Tanjore whenever it suited them.
67. 'treacherously murdering Chanda Saheb': Drawn into the struggle for the Nawabi of Arcot between the French and Chanda Saheb on the one hand, and Muhammad Ali and the English on the other, Tanjore joined the English in 1752. Chanda Saheb was induced to give himself up to the Tanjore General, Mankoji, who had him murdered. Pandit Rao attempts to get Pratap Singh to act according to principle, even in difficult times, rather than opportunistically.
68. 'deceive the Nayak queen': In 1734, Chanda Saheb, acting on behalf of the then Nawab of Arcot, Dost Ali (father of Anwaruddin), marched on Trichinopoly. Here, the widowed queen, Minakshi offered him a bond of a crore of rupees if he would declare her entitled to the throne. Apparently Minakshi required Chanda Saheb to swear on the Koran that he would keep to his word most faithfully. Accordingly, Chanda Saheb took an oath on a brick that was wrapped in the splendid covering usually reserved for the holy book. After this, he left for Arcot, but returned in 1736, made himself the governor of Trichi, eventually locking up the queen in the palace where she poisoned herself (see also note 28).

69. Vijayaraghava: Vijayaraghava, the last of the Tanjore Nayakas of the Vijayanagara line, died in 1673, when the Madurai kings invaded Tanjore. *Tanjore Gazetteer*, p. 266; Madhaviah's notes, p. 252.
70. The English Officer offered to lead one himself: Madhaviah is at pains to portray Lyttelton as the saviour of Tanjore, over the head of the senapati, Mankoji.
71. Stridhana property and gifts given to a woman at the time of her marriage which was considered her exclusive property and was inherited by her children. (Manu ix, 195-200; and see Enrica Garzilli, 'Stridhana: to have and to have not', *J. South Asia Women Studies* 2, 1 (Jan. 1966), 37-55. The Katyayana Smriti lays great emphasis on stridhana, and 'discusses Stridhana property as *saudayika* and *asaudayika*.., What is obtained by a married woman or a maiden in the house of her husband, or her father, from her brother, husband or parents is *saudayika stridhana*. The *saudayika stridhana* could include immovable property. [Katyayana] emphasized the exclusive ownership both in terms of sale and gift, and laid down: Neither the husband, nor the sons nor the father nor the brother have authority over stridhana to take it or give it away' (Flavia Agnes, *The politics of women's rights in India*, p. 16, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999).
72. Tirukkural, verse 408, from the section on kallaamai, Ignorance.
73. 'reason and experience': The exhortation to test a rule against reason and experience rather than to follow it blindly is also very much Madhaviah's position. Pandit Rao may be conservative, but he is also a true scholar.
74. Susruta: A medical writer, date unknown, whose work was translated into Arabic before the 8th century.
75. 'on purely a priori grounds': Clarinda rejects astrology, by reasoning it out. Pandit Rao, in spite of his emphasis on reason and experience (see above) is taken in by the Diwan's ploy over the horoscopes. Clarinda is proved right in the end. When she realizes what a fraud has been perpetrated upon her, it will be the turning point in her feeling for her husband.
76. 'the boastful and hot-headed Frenchman': Lally.
77. 'that very steadiness and single-eyed persistence': According to Pandit Rao, these are the qualities which will lead to the control over India, and the establishment of the British Empire. He sees this more clearly than Lyttelton does. (Pandit Rao's foresight is actually Madhaviah's hindsight as he looks back on south Indian history.)
78. Ananda Ranga Pillai: Best known for the diaries he kept during his service as a dubash or writer under Dupleix and after. There are seven volumes, from 1736-61. Madhaviah had these in his library,

and consulted them for the background to *Clarinda*. (Madhaviah says in *Thillai Govindan* that the British made a great mistake in not trusting the upper class Indian intelligentsia - unlike Dupleix, in this case)

79. 'sishta paripalanam, dhushta nigraham': The ease and appropriateness with which Clarinda quotes Sanskrit is to be noted; but also the composure with which she addresses Lyttelton.
80. 'I presume she is married...': Once again the arguments for and against early marriage are rehearsed, this time Lyttelton taking up the 'progressive' position, and Pandit Rao taking up the liberal-orthodox position. Once again, the Pandit points out that scriptural authority and puranic examples are more tolerant than latter-day practice. In a sense he is bound by custom in Clarinda's regard, as she will have no support or protection after he dies, unless she marries.
81. *sati*: Lyttelton takes an uncompromising position on *sati;* it is 'barbarous and cruel', and can never be truly voluntary. Pandit Rao says that there is no scriptural authority for enforced *sati*, and agrees that in such a case it would indeed be murder. But he clearly believes that a true and voluntary *sati* is possible, and to be admired. Here he deflects the argument, claiming that the Hindu view of death makes it possible to make that leap into the dark without fear. (The abstract discussion on *sati* prefigures the actual event at the end of Book II)
82. As a sannyasi, Pandit Rao is buried, not cremated.
83. Madhava Rao being her husband's brother's son would almost be in the position of Clarinda's son.
84. 'that rare and radiant maiden': Edgar Allan Poe, *The raven*.
85. Book II is much less dependant on historical material than Book I. This is the fictitious core of the novel, with strongly developed characters whose thoughts are revealed through stream-of-consciousness or prose-soliloquy passages, and a strong plot of jealousy and intrigue against which Clarinda is developed.
86. 'two years after the wedding': Clarinda is about 14. The date is 1760.
87. 'it was of no use': As stridhana property it remains in her name, though it could be inherited by her children. All the same, the Diwan acquired the income from the village, without letting her know (see pp. 114-5).
88. 'an ingenious plan': the Machiavellian plot devised by the evil Kamalabai to ruin Clarinda by setting up an intrigue between her and the young and handsome Madhava Rao so that the middle aged Diwan is roused to jealousy and hatred owes something to *Othello*. (see also Srinivasa Sastri's letter in Appendix 3.) Madhaviah was

moved and fascinated by this play. Its influence is apparent in much of his work. In 1903 he made a direct translation of it into Tamil. Fifteen years later, he made an adaptation of it, with Tamil names and place names, under the title, *Udayalan, Padmavati Charitram* uses an *Othello*-like plot of sexual jealousy in the latter half of the book: Sankaran poisons Narayana's mind against his innocent wife Padmavati by the misuse of letters. Madhaviah often alludes to or quotes from the play. His use of prose soliloquies owes something to the play too.

But the influence is deeper than this. Madhaviah was much taken with William Miller's exposition of the play, and transcribed it into his commonplace book. The transcription of Miller's lecture book ends: '*Othello* as a whole is one of the most solemn sermons ever written on the need for right principle, careful judgment, thoughtfulness, steadiness and self restraint for a successful life. The breaking of even the most insignificant moral law (though without deliberateness) may end in utter ruin. William Miller, 1891)

89. Sarangadhara: The story of Sarangadhara goes back to the sixteenth century, and a Telugu version, *Sarangadharacharitramu* was composed by Chemakura Venkatapati for Raghunatha Nayaka's court in Tanjavur. (Raghunathat Nayaka came to the throne in 1614). See an extended discussion in V. Narayan Rao, D. Shulman, & S. Subrahmaniam, *Symbols of substance: court and state in Nayaka period Tamilnadu*, pp. 125-143 (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1992).

Sarangadhara, enticed by his father's courtesan (in some versions, wife), Chitrangi, rejects her advances. In some versions, it is claimed that Chitrangi was originally betrothed to Sarangadhara himself, not to his father. At any rate, when she is rejected by Sarangadhara, she turns against him and slanders him to his father the king. The king then orders Sarangadhara to be maimed and left in the forest to die. Here he is discovered by a passing yogi, the Siddha Matsyendranatha who nurses him back to health, and helps to regenerate his limbs.

90. 'funeral rites of a deceased person': A direct (and anachronistic) intervention by the author. Madhaviah attacks the 'anglicized Hindu of today' for the importance he gives to the proper performance of funeral rites, without any reference to the quality and morality of the life lived. He is also, by extension, attacking empty ritual for its own sake.

He also attacks a popular belief in karma and re-incarnation which, according to him, leads to moral 'inertia and backsliding'. (But see also *Thillai Govindan Miscellany in the Madras Christian College*

Magazine (Oct. 1906-July 1907,p.l4): 'When there is the conviction in a man's mind that his condition in life is not the result of blind chance or destiny, or even the arbitrary will of an almighty and all-knowing Being, but of his own past actions and present doings; that good for good and evil for evil is meted out most rigorously by an all-just and all-powerful law which even his inmost thoughts cannot evade or escape... There cannot be a better foundation for ethics. And all these truths are provable to the intellect by the laws of re-incarnation and karma in a scientific manner, appealing solely to reason and never to revelation or authority.'

91. 'old and sickly': the Diwan is only about fifty, but even at his marriage, he was 'forty five, and looking older.'
92. Clarinda's letter is courteous and deferential in tone, but makes it absolutely clear what she will not consent to do, and what she would like to do with her own money. It is the first time she is aware of her own property and money.
93. Madhaviah's treatment of Clarinda's gradual awareness of her own sexual feelings is notable. He invents a method that is almost like stream-of-consciousness, which makes it possible for him to trace her thoughts, reflections and inner arguments. Her self-awareness and moral sensitivity throughout is important to the novel.
94. The Melur dam: The Tanjore Raja, Pratap Singh continued to have problems in his relationship with the Nawab of Arcot. First of all, he had trouble in paying his tribute. Then the Nawab was intransigent about the Melur dam, refusing to repair it himself, and not allowing Tanjore to do it. In both these cases, the English were the mediators between the two parties.
95. Pratap Singh 's son, Tulsaji: Pratap died in 1762 and was succeeded by his son Tulsaji (1763-87).
96. Padmanabha Patteri of Malabar: Patteri is short for Patteripad, which in turn is a corruption of Bhattadiripad. Bhattadiripads are the same as the Nambudiripads. Malabar was always considered the home of exorcists, practitioners of black magic etc.
97. Anjaneya: Hanuman, Anjana's son by Vayu
98. The face reflects what is uppermost in the mind
as the mirror reflects the image next to it.
(*Tirukkural*, verse 706)
When the eyes understand each other and agree
it does not much matter what lips may utter.
(*Tirukkural*, verse 1100)
99. Book II of *Clarinda* contains four strong characters beside Clarinda herself: the Diwan, Kamala Bai, the Amatya, and Madhava Rao. Each is given passages of reflection—like prose soliloquies - which

allow the reader an insight into the character's mind. It is through such a passage that Madhava Rao is seen to change from rather a charming young man who falls desperately in love with his uncle's new wife, into a morally weak youth who seeks to seduce her.

100. 'far more wicked than his brother the Diwan': The Amatya develops into the lago figure, driven only by ambition and greed.

101. *sati*: Madhaviah develops the classic scenario of an enforced *sati* in order to secure a woman's property. (Kamala Bai's motive, however is pure hatred and revenge).
But did satis happen in Tanjore in the 1760s? Historians are agreed that though satis are recorded mainly in Uttar Pradesh and Bengal, there were indeed a few cases in Tanjore and among the Maravar as late as the 1800s. The Abbe Dubois, *Hindu manners customs and ceremonies*, pp. 361-7, gives detailed accounts of two, one of which happened in a village of the Tanjore District, Pudupettah, in 1794, and one involving the widows of the Tanjore Rajas in 1801.

102. Wherever God erects a house of prayer
The Devil always builds a chapel there
And 'twill be found upon examination
The latter has the larger congregation.
(Daniel Defoe, *The True-born Englishman*, part 1, line 1 ff. Madhaviah wrongly attributes the lines to Butler.)

103. 'the final responsibility for his actions on Man himself: one's responsibility for one's own action is fundamental to Madhaviah's belief, as are reason and rationality.

104. 'I am poor, but': The Patteri might be a charlatan, but he is not so evil that he will assist in a murder in return for money. In this he shows up the Amatya. His own daughter having once burnt to death is a sudden and human touch.

105. Friedrich Max Mueller (1823-1900) was a German Orientalist and professor of comparative philosophy. He studied Sanskrit at Leipzig and elsewhere. In 1846 he went to London and began the task of preparing a complete edition in English of the Rig Veda. He was also the general editor of 50 volumes of English translations under the title, the *Sacred Books of the East*.
Prof G. Buhler (1837-98), Sanskrit scholar and specialist in oriental languages and archaeology; Professor, Elphinstone College, Bombay, 1868-72.

106. Rig vedic hymns to Surya, the first of which is a translation of the Gayatri Mantra (3,62,10). However, the versions that Madhaviah quotes do not match up either with Max Muller and Hermann Oldenberg's *Vedic Hymns* from the *Sacred Books of the East* series (1897), nor with *The Hymns of the Rgveda* translated by Ralph Griffith

(1889). The tropes of the sun symbolizing the one Supreme Being and Truth Eternal, and of Surya as the soul of all things fixed and moving are repeated throughout the Rig Veda, however.

107. *Ecclsiastes*,11.7

108. Lyttelton's rescue of Clarinda might be compared with the rescue described in Jules Verne, *Round the World in 80 days*, 1873. Of this, Sunder Rajan writes, 'In conformity with what had then become a stereotype, the widow is young, beautiful and a princess; the dead husband old, ugly and a king; the other villains a blood thirsty mob and a cabal of scheming Brahmans; the rescue itself an act of chivalry, combining daring adventure with the humanitarian gesture', (p. 43) Madhaviah is indebted to this kind of trope, but he complicates it considerably.

109. Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, Book 4, lines 1132 ff.

110. 'genuinely English': Openness to Indian culture and thought is Lyttelton's most 'unEnglish' attribute, and noted by Pandit Rao; his passion for justice makes him genuinely English. It is of interest that for Madhaviah this is a fundamental English trait.

111. 'the golden chariot, yoked with seven radiant steeds of different hues': Rig Vedic image.

112. 'he had expected a dowry': The daughter-in-law had not yet come to live with her husband (presumably she has not come of age), and therefore had not brought her dowry with her.

113. Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn
(Robert Burns, 'Man was made to mourn')

114. 'the crooked straight': 'the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain', *Isaiah* 40: 3.
After her experience of the enforced *sati* and her rescue, Clarinda begins to think about her 'duty': 'the earnestness of life, and the gravity of its responsibilities'. Part of this at least is what she learns from Lyttelton.

115. The question of remarriage: Madhaviah's Clarinda is remarkably progressive/'modern' in her calm consideration of remarriage for herself. She no longer even thinks of the possibility of an illicit love affair with Madhava Rao. She certainly has been influenced by Lyttelton, but she thinks for herself, and significantly, also seeks validity in the *shastras* and in Pandit Rao's progressive and humane interpretation of them.

116. 'he is a mleccha and a Christian': Madhava Rao is more concerned that Clarinda might be breaking caste rules by having an affair with a mleccha and a Christian, than about her morality.

117. 'a thousand eyes like Indra': Gotama the rishi cursed Indra, after the

god had slept with his wife, Ahalya, (having deceived her into believing he was her husband). Indra has to bear a thousand marks (sores, in some versions) upon his body. These were changed, because of the gods' plea, into a thousand eyes. Madhava Rao quite unconsciously links himself to a tale of transgression and deceit.

118. At length the man perceives it die away And fade into the light of common day.
(Wordsworth, *'Ode on the intimations of immortality'*)

119. 'He who knew more': i.e. Shakespeare. The lines that follow are from sonnet 116:
Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediment. Love is not love
That alters where it alteration finds.

120. 'my duty': The thrust of Clarinda's ideals has changed. The *sati* is truly a turning point in her life. 'These ugly scars... I now regard as the seals God has set on me to remind me throughout my life and constantly of my duty towards my purblind fellow beings'. One cannot but be reminded of George Eliot here and her belief in duty as 'peremptory and absolute'. It is also extraordinary that it is Clarinda who proposes to Madhava Rao that they marry; and she is very aware of how unusual her behaviour is: 'No young woman, perhaps, ever before spoke in this manner to any young man, but it is no little or common ambition that impels me to do so.'

121. 'we are gradually sinking as a race and giving place to the Moghul and the foreigner': Madhaviah's criticism of the failure of Hinduism is made clear here.

122. Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darkened eyes,
(Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, 4)

123. 'practical aspects of Christianity': In Christianity, Clarinda finds not a 'rational explanation of life and its problems'—i.e. not an intellectual solution—but a message of hope and comfort, and the promise of happiness.

124. 'Blessed are they that mourn.' *Matthew* 5:4. 'Come unto me ye that are weary.' *Matthew* 11:28. 'Your heart shall rejoice.' *John* 16:22. The Son of Man has come to seek and save.' *Luke* 19:20. 'I am come that they might have life.' *John* 10:10.

125. 'I am as all these men...': Edwin Arnold, *Light of Asia*, Book III; Siddhartha's words when he realizes that life is not one of continual pleasure and happiness; that he is one with the suffering many whose prayers are either unheard or unheeded. This text interested Madhaviah: in 1918 he wrote a life of the Buddha entitled *Siddhartha*, at the end of which he added some verses in translation from *The light of Asia*.

126. 'shining example of the new ideal': Lyttelton is clearly idealized as an exemplar. He cannot sustain this position; eventually, Clarinda will be the more consistent Christian.
127. Conversion is not a consequence of repentance for Clarinda, nor is it a struggle with doctrine, nor a questioning of her national identity, her place within her community, etc. In this she differs from both Satyananda (*Satyananda*) and Gopalan (*Padmavati* III).
128. 'a small monthly provision for her own maintenance': Clarinda's agency and independence is established as she is enabled to manage her inheritance, and has her own income.
129. 'the third son': The younger sons of English families, who could not inherit the family property, often took careers in the Church or the Army, or went to the colonies.
130. 'she became insane': compare the story of Rochester and Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre*.
131. The Company encouraged officers to have liaisons with Indian women - or often turned a blind eye to what was fairly common practice. But Madhaviah is anxious to keep the relationship between Clarinda and Lyttelton one of idealized love and romance.
132. 'One touch of nature' Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, II, 3,176.
133. 'Who is this you are telling me about?': Why has Clarinda not guessed? Perhaps she does not wish to? She is also portrayed as too idealistic, and possibly naive in the ways of the world. (Pandit Rao always warned her of this.)
134. Trichinopoly cantonment: Trichinopoly was at that time in the possession of the Nawab of Arcot, but had a garrison of English soldiers.
135. 'her Moorish lover who kills her': i.e. Desdemona, in *Othello*.
136. 'the old tent-maker': i.e. Omar Khayyam. A literal translation of the name al-Khayyami (or al-Khayyam) means 'tent-maker', and this may have been the trade of Ibrahim, his father,
137. 'Oh Thou, who man of baser Earth didst make...': *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, Fitzgerald (1859), verse 58. The quotation, coming via Fitzgerald, is an anachronism, of course.
The philosophy of Omar Khayyam (sceptical of divine Providence, and concentrating on the pleasures of the fleeting moment), is of course, entirely different from what Clarinda comes to believe in and live by, i.e. one's moral responsibility both for one's own actions, and for bettering the world.
138. The name Clarinda is intriguing. It is of course, the name under which the Brahman woman who came to Schwartz asked to be baptized. It is unusual in that all the other names in the Church Register of Palamcotta for the year 1780 are either Biblical names, or names of Christian attributes. (New converts were also sometimes

named after the early missionaries). 'Clarinda' stands out because of its English pastoral and literary associations. Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberate* (1581) tells the story of Tancred and Clarinda. The name was popular in the 17th century. Aphra Behn (1640-89) has a poem, 'To the fair Clarinda'. It is almost certainly Lyttelton's choice.

139. 'her own clear duty and deep devotion': Madhaviah's double view on the qualities of the prativrata are noticeable. He acknowledges that the ideal of wife as prativrata can only be the result of discriminatory and patriarchal practice; yet it is an ideal that he is much moved by.
140. 'their love was to bear fruit': the question of the child and what happens to it is left vague.
141. Lyttelton's 'soliloquy' is juxtaposed to the previous section on Clarinda's devotion to him. This highlights her moral ascendancy over him, but also the beginnings of the rift within the marriage, which is dealt with insightfully.
142. Schwartz: The first missionaries brought to Tranquebar by King Frederick IV of Denmark were from Halle in Germany: Ziegenbalg and Plutschau, who arrived in 1706. The work in Tranquebar was followed with great interest in England, although the Company actively discouraged missionary activity in their territories. When the German missionaries wished to extend their work beyond Tranquebar into British territory, and into the still independent kingdom of Tanjore, the Anglican Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) agreed to support them in Madras, Cuddalore, etc. The most famous of the missionaries they supported in this way was Christian Friedrich Schwartz. He spent ten years in Tranquebar, sixteen in Trichinopoly, and then moved to Tanjore in 1772, until he died in 1798.
143. 'It is in many respects a dark period in the history of the Presidency...': Canon Penny, *The History of the Church in Madras*. It is to be remembered that the company did not at this time encourage Christian missionary activity. The Company had its chaplains, but these were few. Canon Penny is specially referring to the rank-and-file army men. See also Hawes, *Poor Relations*, p. 15.
144. 'to marry an Indian': A mixed-race marriage 'with one born a heathen' was one that Schwartz would not have approved of, any more than he would have approved a liaison.
145. 'If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter life with one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.' *Matthew* 18:9.
146. Rahab and Thamar: known to be harlots, but mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Madhaviah is giving to Lyttelton the very words that Caldwell uses in his apology for Clarinda's position:

'And if it be remembered that the sacred list of our Lord's progenitors according to the flesh, contains the names of Thamar and Rahab...' Caldwell, as 19th century Church historian may have viewed Clarinda as a harlot, and felt the need to apologise for her; but surely it is inappropriate, at the very least, for Lyttelton to use the reference.

147. 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.' *John* 8:7. Lyttelton appeals to Schwartz's sense of Christian compassion. Again, the analogy is inappropriate if Clarinda was totally unaware of the deception practised on her. Schwartz's over-scrupulousness is credible, however, from Caldwell's description of him, which Madhaviah quotes on p. 215.
148. 'Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more.' *John* 8:11.
149. 'to bring about her confinement prematurely': What happens to the child? It is not clearly stated that it dies, though we suppose so. (see also Lyttelton's suicide note, p. 230: 'Let not the sin and blame of the unworthy father be visited in any way on the sweet offspring of our love.')
150. In 1773 the British besieged Tanjore, the king, Tulsaji, was taken prisoner and the Nawab of Arcot, Muhammad Ali given possession of Tanjore. However, the Court of Directors disapproved of the transaction and ordered the restitution of the raja's kingdom. After this, Tanjore became a Protected State, and the Raja the direct ally of the Company. In return, he paid the English a subsidy of 4 lakh rupees a year.
151. It is the little rift within the lute
That by and by will make the music mute
And, ever widening, slowly silence all.
(Tennyson, *Merlin and Vivien*, line 388.) The relationship between Lyttelton and Clarinda within their marriage is a fine psychological study.
152. 'England, where they are most potent in potting', *Othello*, II.3.79. Also, 'the Dane, the German and swag-bellied Hollander were nothing to the English.'
153. And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.
(Coleridge, *Christabel*, Part 2)
154. 'the motive-hunting of motiveless malignity': Coleridge on Iago's last soliloquy. (*Notes on the tragedies of Shakespeare*: '*Othello*').
155. 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life.' *James* 1.17
156. 'Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.' *Luke* 15.7.
157. 'pious Christian and zealous evangelist': cf the women evangelists

in *Satyananda* and *Padmavati III*. Madhaviah tends to be suspicious of any over-zealous and bigoted evangelism; but here he is on the whole sympathetic to Mary's engagement with good works, and her genuine kindness.

158. Caldwell, *Records*, p. 4, 'A young heathen accountant had been baptized by an English sergeant after he had learnt the five principles of catechism (i.e. the Lord's Prayer, the ten commandments, the words and institution of baptism, and the same of the Eucharist -quoted in the appendices, p. 258-9). It had grieved us that he should have baptized the young man before he had attained a distinct knowledge of Christianity.'
159. 'some years passed on in this manner': Why does Clarinda wait so long? 'She gives no reason' for her delay, and presumably Madhaviah approves of her taking her time. She also waits until Schwartz returns, and asks to be baptized by him.
160. *Matthew* 6.2
161. 'When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.' *Matthew* 6.3.
162. From the evidence of the page from the Palamcottah Church Register of 1780 (see Appendix 2) it seems that the community of Christians in Palamcottah was largely lower caste in origin. But there was at least one other Brahman woman (name erased), and also a few Vellalas, including Devasahayam Pillai, himself a poet and father of the well-known lyricist, Vedanayakam Shastri.
163. Note Madhaviah's criticism of the caste-consciousness of the Palayamkottai Christians of his time.
164. We cannot all be heroes and fill a hemisphere With some great daring venture, some deed that mocks at fear; But we can fill a lifetime with kindly deeds and true, There's always noble service for noble souls to do.
(19th century verse, author unknown.)

A. Madhaviah (1872-1925) a pioneering novelist in both Tamil and English has written three novels in Tamil and three in English, besides several plays, poems, articles and short stories in both languages. He was also instrumental in setting up two journals *Tamizh Nesan* and *Panchamirtam*.

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